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**FIGHTING
THE SAVAGES.**

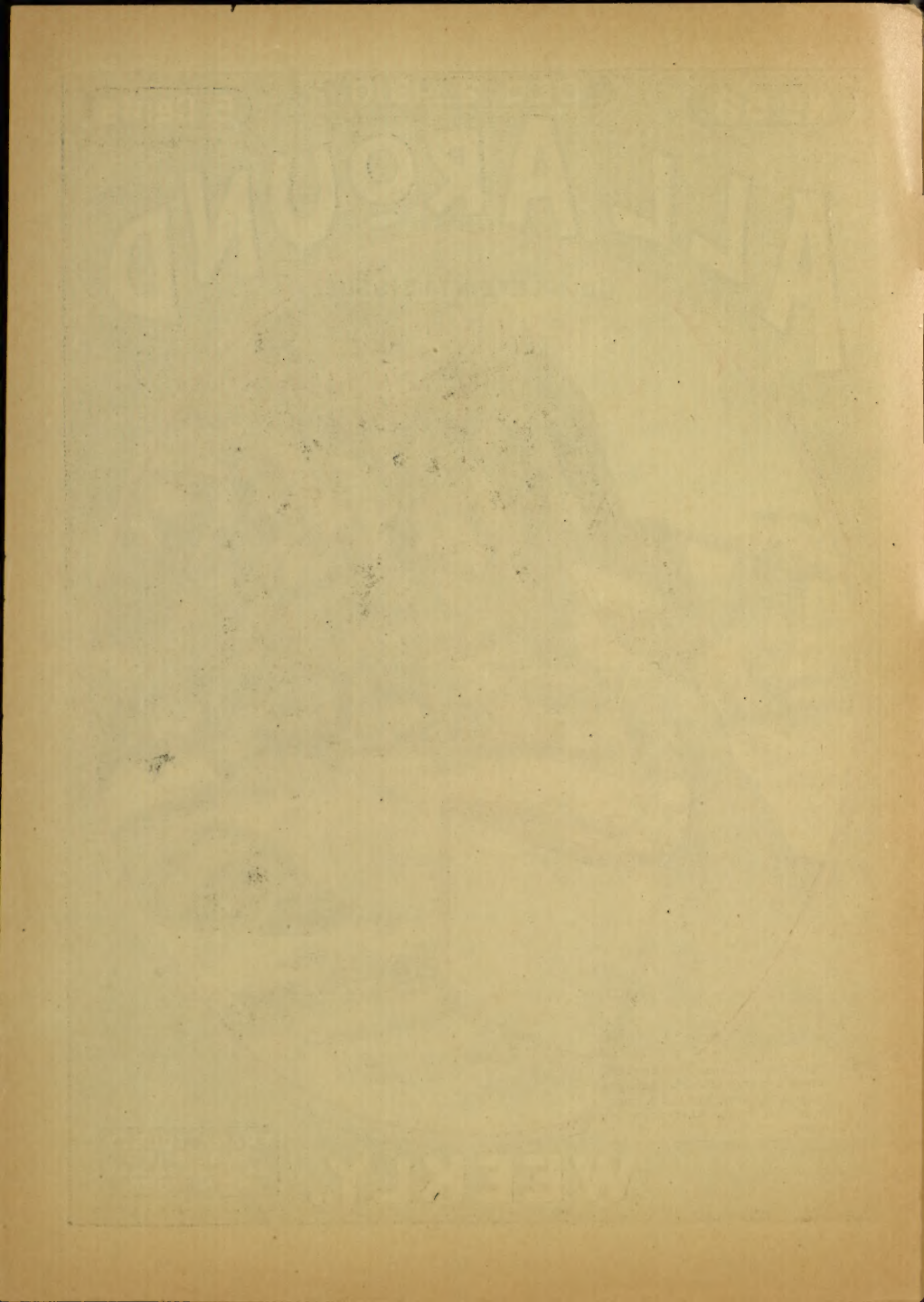
By FRANK R. TURNER



They had just reached the cliffs, when a crowd of dusky savages came bounding around a corner of the rocks. Phil drew his pistol.

WEEKLY.

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Fighting the Savages

OR,

THE PEARL OF THE PACIFIC

By FRANK R. TURNER

CHAPTER I.

A PLOT AND ITS INTENDED VICTIM.

"Land, ho!"

So sang out a man at the masthead, on the lookout one bright, sunny afternoon in summer, many years ago.

The ship *Billow*, Captain Westbrook, from New York, was in the Southern Pacific at that time, and it was aboard her that the cry of the lookout was heard.

"Aye, aye!" muttered the captain, when he heard the cry, which penetrated even to the cabin where he was sitting with his mate examining the charts. "We've reached the place, sure enough."

"And now to carry out our bargain made with old Husted. We'll have no trouble, eh?"

"Not a bit, Hodge, my boy—not a bit. We go ashore for water, the boy goes with us, he gets lost, becomes alarmed, frightened at the savages or something else, and have to leave without him."

"And then we go back, and the old man comes down handsomely with the balance."

"And then he is alone to enjoy the inheritance."

"And nobody the wiser except us, and we've been paid for our tongues. The boy doesn't suspect?"

"Suspect, Hodge? No, sir, he does not. Ain't you and

me always been his friends? Don't he defend us against the slanders of that Turk of a steward and those fellows in the fo'c's'l?"

"Ha, ha, Captain Westbrook—West for short—that was a bully good plan. Dickson, Hedges and Long are clever fellows. One would think they were ready to mutiny to hear 'em talk, but we know better than that."

"You're right we do, Mr. Hodgeson; but please remember that name ain't West, for short or for long, either."

"All right, Captain West—brook, I won't forget it; but my name is Hodge, as you 'pear to've forgotten."

"No, I didn't, not until you made me with your blasted 'for short!' I'm going on deck to take a look at this land."

"The future home of Archie Mellen, with all the rights and privileges he wants except the getting away. Ho, ho, my fine boy will have a lonesome time of it, I'm afraid. I don't know what we are going to do about Norton, though, for he's the boy's friend, and mighty suspicious."

Archie Mellen, the person referred to by the villain Hodge, was a lad of about seventeen years of age, and a sailor on board the *Billow*, this being his first voyage, though he had proved himself apt and had learned rapidly, being already as good a seaman as any sailor on the vessel.

He was of medium height, well-formed and agile, hand-

some in face and figure, had a singularly frank and open countenance, was intelligent and of agreeable manners, made friends rapidly, and as faithful to his various duties as the sun in its daily course.

He had golden-brown hair, dark-blue eyes, rosy complexion, bronzed now to a light olive, lips like ripe cherries, a straight, clean-cut nose, a mouth and chin which would drive an artist wild, and cheeks dimpled just enough to add piquance, but not effeminacy, to his face, which was singularly beautiful and winning for a boy of his years.

He had inherited his good looks from both of his parents, who had been dead for many years, since he was a child of four or five years, his uncle, the Mr. Husted alluded to, having brought him up.

- This man was wicked, unscrupulous and covetous to excess, having long had his eye upon the inheritance which would, in case of Archie's dying before he reached his majority, fall to him.

His two sisters, one of whom was Archie's mother, had come into a large property, which was settled on their children in such a manner that in case the one, who was a daughter, did not marry before she was of age, it would revert to the other, Archie, and in the event of the latter's death before his majority, to Mr. Husted.

Some time previous to the death of Archie's parents, the father of the other child was reported lost at sea, his daughter having accompanied him, which left Archie the sole heir to the property, unless, as already stated, he should die before he was twenty-one.

The money was held in trust by Mr. Husted, who took particular pains that Archie should know as little about it as possible, for the very good reason that if he had been asked to render an account of his stewardship, some very awkward facts might come to light.

As the boy grew older and began to know more about his affairs, the uncle saw that he was in danger of being placed in a most embarrassing position, and he therefore conceived a plan of avoiding this, and getting the whole property in his own hands.

Archie's natural tendencies were toward a sea-faring life, and Mr. Husted took advantage of this to carry out his nefarious projects, having no difficulty whatever in persuading the lad to make a voyage on the *Billow*, just to see how he liked it.

The man was well acquainted with the captain and mate of the vessel, and his plans were consequently more easily made than if he had had to strike a bargain with some other unscrupulous rascal whom he did not know so well.

Mr. Norton, the second mate, to whom Hodge had alluded, was an entirely different character from his superiors, and, had he known of the dastardly plot against Archie, would have opposed it to the utmost, as not only

was he the friend of the boy, but an honest man withal, and set his face firmly against all that was mean and wicked.

He was not a ship's parson by any means, for he had his faults like the rest of mankind, one of these being an unfortunate taste for liquor, which made him a different being when under its temporary influence.

The captain smiled to himself when Hodge spoke of probable trouble with this man, and said, under his breath:

"Two or three stiff drinks of whisky will fix Mr. Norton all right. I know how to manage him if he makes any fuss over the matter."

So saying, he went on deck, where he saw Archie standing by the starboard rail talking to the cabin boy, who was two years or more his junior, and for whom he had taken a great liking.

The boy was called Phil, and had been on several long voyages, being quite a good seaman for his age, though he hated anything dirty and always got out of doing that kind of jobs if he could.

He was an independent young fellow, and did pretty much as he liked, without resorting to direct disobedience, the captain humoring him considerably, more upon his father's account than because of any tender feelings.

Phil's father was a ship owner, and possessed considerable influence, having often got Captain Westbrook a good billet, when otherwise he would have been without, for he was not generally liked, and it was therefore strict policy that he should treat Phil with all due deference.

Mr. Norton had no such reasons, however, and he used to annoy Phil occasionally, as will be seen, more for the fun of the thing than out of any ill-feeling, as he liked the lad as much as anybody aboard.

"Do you know what land that is over there, Phil?" asked Archie.

"It's an island, one of a series, mostly of coral formation. Some of them have lagoons, but the one nearest to us has not; it is quite large, and a beautiful place to roam around, though they say that the niggers are not the best fellows to meet."

"Nonsense," said Captain Westbrook, advancing; "there ain't no niggers on that island or anywhere near it. It's totally uninhabited. I'm goin' to put in there for water, for there's lots there, cold and fresh."

"And can I go in the boat, captain, when you do?" asked Archie, eagerly, turning his handsome face toward the captain.

"Why, yes, to be sure ye can," answered the scoundrel, exulting in his secret soul over the already assured success of his plan. "Certainly, ye ain't had a chance to shake yer legs for some months, and it's no more'n right that you should do so now."

"And can Phil come, too?"

"Oh, I guess he don't care to go with you, and besides, I don't hardly think I can spare him, not the first trip, anyhow."

Mr. Norton, passing at this moment, saw the expression upon the skipper's face, and thought to himself:

"The old alligator means mischief to some one. I know it by the look on his mug. I'll bet it's Phil."

"Oh, that be blowed," said Phil, in answer to the captain. "I can go as well as not; there's nothing to be done here."

The skipper, not wishing to offend the lad, gave an unwilling consent to his going ashore, wondering at the same time how he was going to manage so that the boy need not suspect the treachery meditated against Archie.

Norton misinterpreted the look upon his face, and, thinking that his reluctance was only feigned, took a step which prevented Phil's going, thereby unwittingly increasing Archie's peril.

CHAPTER II.

PHIL SUSPECTS TREACHERY.

Along in the afternoon the Billow dropped anchor in a snug little harbor or cove on the windward side of the principal island in the group discovered in the morning, and a boat was soon after lowered, several empty casks being dropped into the water, bung up, to be towed ashore and filled.

Archie had dropped over the side and into the boat, in which were already seated Mr. Hodge, the three sailors, Hedges, Long and Dixon, the steward, a disagreeable fellow named Wardle, holding the warp, and being about to cast off, when Phil started to follow his chum.

"Come here, Phil, my boy," said Mr. Norton, whose hands were behind his back.

"Not now; I'm going in the boat," answered the independent Phil.

"Go and slush down the mizzen-mast—it's in a nasty state."

"Oh, bother; give your dirty jobs to somebody else—to one of the Dutchmen."

"No, I want you to do it. Go and get the slush-pot, and make no fuss about it," continued the officer, coming nearer.

"Oh, go to blazes," said Phil, putting his hand on the rail.

"What's that?" said Mr. Norton, suddenly thrusting one hand forward almost in Phil's face.

In his hand was a squealing rat, which he had kept quiet until now, and when Phil saw it he jumped back about three feet.

He was abnormally afraid of rats, as some people are, though not fearing many things worse, and the man, knowing this, had recourse to a trick of this sort to enforce obedience and keep Phil aboard.

"You won't?" he said, advancing once more, with a grin on his face, and thrusting the struggling rodent towards the lad.

"Yes, yes," cried Phil. "Put that nasty thing out of the way and I'll do anything. Ugh! I don't see how you can touch him."

The boy went for the slush-pot at once, and the steward, taking advantage of his absence, threw the warp into the boat, and the men pulled away to shore, leaving Phil still aboard, the second mate laughing at the success of his stratagem.

He put the rat into a locker, where he could get him again when occasion required, and when he saw that the boat had reached the shore, and was being hauled up, he told Phil that he guessed he'd done enough and might knock off work.

Phil slid down to the deck, and hanging up the slush-pot, said:

"You only did that to keep me from going ashore. You know I hate rats worse than the old scratch. You're no good, and I don't like you for a cent."

"Look out, my boy," replied the man, with a laugh. "I'll get that fellow out again if you're saucy, and make him bite your nose."

Phil, fearing that Mr. Norton might have the rat under his jumper at that very moment, retreated, and the man said, advancing closer:

"I think I've done you a service, Phil, instead of a bad turn. I don't like the old man's looks, and you may depend upon it that he wanted to do you an injury."

"Do you think so?" asked Phil, gravely. "By Jove, I've got an idea that it's not me, but Archie, that he's working against. He's been fooling the lad all along, he and Hodge. Those three sea lawyers forward are up to mutiny, too, I'll bet my head."

"Hedges and Dickson?"

"Yes, sir, and Long. They're regular pirates. Why, they ain't good enough to eat with the pigs."

"Darby and Joan? I guess not. Why, that young hoar, Darby, won't even bite their shins, for fear of getting poisoned."

There was a pair of young pigs on board the Billow, whom the sailors, on account of their sex, had named Darby and Joan as alluded to, the creatures affording the men considerable amusement.

It is a by no means rare occurrence for a deep water vessel to carry an animal of some kind on board, generally a pig, dog, or goat, for sailors like pets, and always make company of the live stock, deriving great amusement therefrom.

Phil had been on a vessel once where the dog had been mysteriously lost overboard, and, saddened at the absence of the ship's pet, he had said, half in jest, that he had much rather have lost a certain shipmate of his, a fellow, by the way, who was not a favorite by any means.

"Look here, Mr. Norton," continued the boy, drawing closer to the man, and forgetting his horror of rats in his anxiety, "if anything happens to Arch, I'll go crazy, and it will be your fault, so just mind that."

"There's no danger, master Phil," he made reply, and then he went into the cabin, while Phil looked over the side and watched the island.

He stood there, gazing listlessly at the shore for a long time, when he was suddenly recalled to himself by hearing a loud cry from the island.

In another instant he saw the men hurry down the beach, shove off the boat, and begin to pull for the ship with all their might, a crowd of naked savages appearing close behind them.

"By Jove, the place is inhabited," he exclaimed, "and by the worst kind of fellows, too, worse than rats. Hallo, Captain Westbrook, we're in danger!"

The lad quickly ran aft, and the captain, coming on deck, saw what was the matter, and shouted to all hands to get up the anchor and make sail with all possible speed.

"By gum!" he muttered to himself, "it was wuss'n we expected, and this young feller may not be the only one that's sacrificed."

"What's that?" said Phil, who caught part of this speech. "You did intend to sacrifice Arch, then?"

"No, no. I said that he was, and that others might be. Can't ye see for yourself that he's missing. He ain't in the boat, no, nor Long, either."

The boat had approached nearer by this time, and the chances were that the survivors would escape, although the crowd on shore was very large.

"Confound it," said the captain, Phil not being near enough to hear him, "I didn't want to lose one of my best men. I never supposed there was any niggers there. Last time I struck the place there wasn't one."

At this moment a dozen canoes were seen to shoot out from around a small point of land, where they had hitherto been concealed, each manned by a dozen blacks.

A shower of arrows flew towards the boat, and Dickson was seen to suddenly throw up his hands with a cry, drop his oar, and sink into the bottom of the boat.

The anchor was hauled up by the time the surviving

sailors got aboard, and all hands turned to and completed the work of hoisting the sails.

The canoes were alarmingly near, and another shower of arrows came flying upon deck, the mate getting a bad crack on the head, and Hedges having a piece of his ear cut off by one of the sharp-pointed missiles.

"Go for the muskets," yelled the captain in terror, for this assault was entirely unexpected, "the ruffians will be upon us in a minute."

He was right, for just as Mr. Hodge emerged from the cabin, with a huge navy revolver in his hands, half a dozen dusky warriors clambered up the side and leaped upon deck.

The captain struck the foremost one with an iron belaying-pin, while the second mate seized another by the throat, and rolled to the deck with him.

Hodge rushed upon the others, and fired point blank in the face of a black giant, the fiercest of the tribe, and a man evidently of considerable importance.

He fell to the deck, and Hodge instantly discharged the other chambers of his weapon in the midst of the astonished horde.

There were nearly a score of the terrible creatures on board at that moment, but when they heard the report of firearms, they uttered cries of terror, and leaped pell-mell into the sea, and took to their canoes most incontinently.

They had evidently never before seen men who fought with such dreadful weapons, and concluded, most likely, that it was not best to remain longer in a situation fraught with so much danger.

The dead bodies were thrown overboard, and the sailors sent a parting volley after the savages, causing an increase in the death-rate, and making a greater repast for the sharks, which were now seen approaching.

Phil was very much excited, particularly as he had heard Hedges muttering aside that if he had known that there were any savages about he would not have undertaken to get rid of the lad on the captain's account.

The boy stood looking irresolutely over the side after the negroes had gone, and then suddenly espying one of the casks in the water, sprang overboard, and disappeared from sight, while a cry of horror went up from all on board.

CHAPTER III.

THE RAT IN THE RUM BOTTLE.

In an instant Phil rose to the surface, and, holding up his hand, shouted out:

"I am going after Arch, Mr. Norton. There has been treachery. Look out for the captain!"

Then he dove again, as two fierce sharks, attracted by the noise he made, began swimming rapidly towards him.

When he arose once more it was at a point much nearer the shore, and his maneuver was seen in a moment.

He had put the cask between him and his enemies, and when they approached too near he had only to turn it over and over to frighten them away.

He could not make as rapid progress towing the cask as he could without it, but he was safer with its company, and he retained it until he reached water shallow enough to wade.

There was another danger quite as bad as that of being attacked by sharks, and this was the chance of being captured by the islanders, who, with loud yells, were driving their canoes toward the luckless swimmer.

Phil was supplied with a pistol, having taken the precaution to stick one wrapped in tarpaulin into his belt, together with a supply of powder and shot, before he left the ship.

He had no intention of firing upon the blacks, however, for he saw that he could distance them, their attention not having been attracted to him until he had passed the sharks.

Shaking the water from his garments, the lad dashed up the beach and plunged at once into the thicket, disappearing from sight of the natives, who landed at a point considerably further down the coast, and near the cove where they had at first appeared.

In the meantime, the second mate had worked himself into a terrible state of excitement, and walking up to Captain Westbrook, shook his first in the latter's face, and said with an oath:

"You miserable scoundrel, you; it was you who got that boy into this trouble, you and your confounded pals. It's a pity they weren't all killed by the savages. Lower your boats and attack these ruffians, or I swear I'll report you at the first place we land."

The captain knew that to try and calm the angry officer would be useless, and neither could he be bullied, the wily wretch taking a course which he knew would be more productive of the results he desired than any other.

"You are excited, Mr. Norton," he said, quietly, "and don't know what you're saying. Come into the cabin and have a glass of grog."

The shrewd captain knew his officer's weakness, and determined to fill him up to the chin with liquor, if it were necessary, in order to keep him quiet.

He realized that if the sailors once suspected that he had intentionally betrayed Archie, there would be no restraining them, and that the mouth of the angry second-mate must be closed at once or much mischief might be done.

"Come, take a glass of grog," he repeated, "and we will talk the matter over quietly by ourselves."

Norton hesitated, and was lost; for the captain and mate, slipping their arms through his, led him down to the cabin, the temptation being stronger than he could stand against when he once saw the glasses set out.

Not one glass, but a dozen were given to the man, until he at last had entirely forgotten the incidents of the afternoon, and only talked upon such subjects as his superiors introduced.

By the time night had fallen he was fast asleep, having fallen under the table in a drunken drowse, and having been carried to his room and laid in his berth by the two rascals.

The vessel was then put upon her course once more, and by the morning the islands were out of sight and forgotten by all but the two villains, Norton being still in a sound slumber.

"What will you say to the boy's father when he turns up missing?" was the question put by Hodge to the captain that night as they sat in the cabin discussing the events of the day.

"What can I say? I could not help his going. He is dead, of course, and no one but a hot-headed boy would have taken such a desperate risk."

"You heard what he said to Norton. That man must be kept tight until he forgets all about this affair. You can tell Mr. Preston that Phil was killed by one of these savages or tumbled overboard and was gobbled up by a shark. The men will all swear to the story if you pay 'em."

"But Norton?"

"Well, captain, if you take good care to keep him drunk whenever there is any chance for his saying anything, he won't trouble you."

"You're right, Hodge, and the rum bottle will be the rat which I will use to hold him in check," alluding to the poor fellow's favorite method of getting Phil to do the dirty work.

"That's it, for if he keeps on he'll find more than rats in the rum bottle. There'll be snakes, and toads, and such like."

"The thing's done, then, and we have only to give proof of the boy's death to secure the plum which the old duffer promised us."

"So long as there's no danger of his coming back, it don't matter if he isn't dead, though there ain't no doubt of that by this time."

At noon the next day, just before dinner was served, Captain Westbrook was seated in his own room, looking over the log which he had just written up to suit his own version of the sad affair of the previous day, when Mr. Norton entered unannounced.

Indeed, the captain had not noticed him, and did not know of his presence until he had made it known by a loud cough, and the question:

"You expect to make those lies pass for truth, do you, Captain West?"

The captain closed the book with a bang, and turning around, the color mounting to his temples, said fiercely:

"You've been looking over my shoulders, you villain."

"It is you who are the villain, Captain West. I demand that you put the vessel about and——"

"Who commands this ship?"

"I do for the present, Captain West, as you shall——"

"My name is Westbrook," returned the other, now turning pale, "and I want you to understand it, too."

"It is Westbrook here, but West in England. Names, as well as other things, are bigger in America than in England, the effect of the climate, I suppose," said Norton, dryly.

"Come, come, Jack," said the skipper, softly, hoping to wheedle this man out of his ugly temper, "suppose you take a drink; you need one to brace you up."

"No, no, I'll not touch the accursed stuff. You shall hear me, for I am determined to speak."

"All right then, speak ahead, but I'm going to have a drink anyhow," and the sly rascal arose, went to a locker, and put a bottle and one glass upon the table.

Had Jack Norton prevented that seemingly trivial action he might not have been lost.

"Come now," said the captain, filling his glass, "what do you want to say? I'm a-listening. It isn't many skippers that would put up to such nonsense, but you're a good man, you are, and I'm disposed to be considerate."

At that moment Hodge entered quietly, shut the door unnoticed, locked it and put the key in his pocket.

"You must go back to those islands and rescue those boys. I know your plot now, but I will keep quiet if you get them back, and promise not to hurt Archie; I know now that you daren't touch Phil, and that you hadn't anything to do with his going ashore."

"How could I help the savages from taking the boy? I didn't know they were there, and didn't I lose two of my best men by 'em?"

"Two of the biggest scoundrels that ever walked. We are well rid of them. It'll be the turn of you and Hodge next."

"I tell you there isn't any chance that they are still alive. If I thought there was, why, I'd go back at once. Take a drink, Jack; your nerves are not steady yet."

"Will you promise to go back?"

"Yes."

"Then here's success to that, and may the fiend take you if you are lying to me!"

He seized the tumbler of spirits and drained it off at a single swallow.

Then he choked, turned purple, reeled and tried to catch himself, and finally fell to the floor, gasping and crying out:

"Villain, you have betrayed me! May my curse follow you to——"

He could say no more, for the drug which the captain had put into the grog now exerted its influence, and the poor man lay like one dead.

CHAPTER IV.

THE WRECK OF THE NEPTUNE.

"It's a wild night, mates."

"Aye, and will be wilder. We will never pull through it."

"How the petrels howled about us yesterday. I marked it then as a bad sign."

"The darkness is so thick you can almost feel it."

"Yes, and I like not that sulphurous rift down low on the horizon which we saw but lately."

"It's gone now."

"Aye, but I know well what it foreboded. Hark! do you hear the rising wind?"

"May fate protect the sweet child in the cabin, her and her father, for as sure as I live——"

"Do you hear that? It is not the wind, it is——"

"Breakers ahead!" sang out a stentorian voice.

"We are on a lee shore! We are lost as sure as——"

"Ha! look at that. Did you see what that flash revealed? The ugly, black——"

"Heavens! what a crash! I should think the sky would be split in——"

"The squall is upon us!" roared a voice. "Stand by to take in every rag. Lay out there and——"

"Save us! Did you hear that? Poor Tom Buntline has been struck by lightning."

"Quick! To the wheel there, John! Lively, my boys, lively!"

The sound of the speaking trumpet was drowned by another crash of thunder, which was simultaneous with a blinding sheet of fire, which seemed to envelop the whole ship.

Then rose a startling cry, heard above the noise of the tempest and the roar of the waves.

"We are driving upon the rocks!"

The breakers were seen distinctly now, white and foaming, their crested heads rearing high in the air, while the

roar which they made as they rushed headlong upon the rugged rocks was most terrible to hear.

The doomed ship was the Neptune, bound home from the Pacific, and on board were the father and daughter afterwards reported lost, the latter, a child of five years, being one of the heirs to that large estate for which Mr. Husted was willing to sell his soul.

Pearl Maitland had no fear, and when the storm broke around the devoted ship, she laughed and clapped her tiny hands as though the terrible war of the elements was rare sport, gotten up for her especial pleasure.

Her father knew that the vessel was doomed, and like a prudent man he began to prepare for the worst, feeling well assured that the catastrophe could not be delayed more than a few hours at the most.

He buckled a life-preserver around his little daughter's slender form, and got a rope ready with which to lash her to a spar when that should be necessary, as he foresaw that the Neptune must eventually go to pieces.

The end came sooner than he expected, for the large billows, catching up the now unmanageable vessel, the rudder having been carried away and the foremast rent in twain by the lightning, lifted her away up the beach upon the black and jagged rocks, and threw her upon her side.

The water rushed over her and carried the poor sailors overboard, the captain, seeing there was no hope, lashing himself to the rigging, close to where Maitland had secured himself with Pearl clasped in his arms.

The waves beat furiously over the ship, and all save these three had been lost, but it was not written that they should perish yet, and the storm passed by in its fury, preserving them for the present.

The ship was on its side and appeared to be fast breaking up, and yet there still remained enough to cling to, and it was not ordained that they should perish at that time, though of course their end must come at last.

Maitland seemed to feel this, and he cheered his little Pearl with consoling speeches, though the child needed none, feeling no terror and laughing at the storm as though it were a rare diversion.

The winds still blew with great velocity, and the billows rolled over the vessel with tremendous force, and still it did not break up, being wedged between two huge masses of rock, which preserved it almost intact.

It seemed as if the elements knew that these three lives were not to be given up at this time, and as though the voice of the over-ruling Power had bade them be calm and spare those in whom He took an interest, the waves soon subsided and the fierce hurricane sank until it was no stronger than a whisper, the clouds breaking away and the superb moon shedding its benign light over the weird

scene, as if to reassure the poor shipwrecked ones that there was still hope.

The storm had passed, but the night was still far from spent, and Maitland, seeing that the danger was over, although the vessel was a wreck, took his little daughter down into the cabin and laid her in her berth, where she soon fell asleep.

The morning came at last, bright and glorious, the sun shining brightly and the waves just rippling over the beach, looking as though they had never been any higher and had never done any harm to any one.

Of all the ship's company there was left only the captain and the Maitlands, all the others having been lost in one way or another.

The ship lay on her side and was badly damaged, the chances of her going to pieces in the next storm being very great.

"We must get to the shore," said Captain Ingraham, "and take as much of this stuff with us as we can, for no one knows how long we may have to remain there."

"The boats are all stove in. How shall we get ashore?"

"There are axes, and yonder are some broken spars; we can make a raft, and upon that reach the shore, besides taking what we need. Once there, you and I can make as many trips as necessary, until we get off all that is of use to us before the ship breaks up completely."

"Then let us go to work."

In a couple of hours the two men had formed a light but very strong raft of spars, with beams laid across them and lashed down with rope, a number of planks being placed over the beams as a flooring.

This plan brought the floor high enough above the water to keep it perfectly dry, and then the two workers put on a supply of food and water, bedding, kitchen utensils, the galley stove, several coils of rope, and a lot of spare sails from the cabin.

Putting Pearl upon the top of the sail cloth where she would not be wetted by the dashing spray, Captain Ingraham and Maitland secured a couple of oars, and rowed along until they came to a place where they could make a safe landing.

Taking the things from the raft and bidding Pearl await their return, they rowed back to the ship and got another supply of goods, taking all the cabin doors and windows, ripping off all the good boards which remained, in order to fashion a house on the island, for as they knew they were destined to remain there for some time, they meant to live as comfortable as possible.

As the tide arose it facilitated their movements, for they cast many heavy articles into the water, which the waves caught up and carried to land.

Besides this, it was not so difficult to load the raft, which

was on a level with the ship's deck at high tide, and during this period much greater progress was made than before.

At last the night came on and they were obliged to desist from their work and seek a place of rest for the night, as they did not dare remain on the vessel until morning, not knowing what might happen in the night.

Pearl had wandered off by herself and found some fruit, which she brought to her father and asked if she might eat.

The captain knew the fruit well and nodded affirmatively to Maitland who at once gave his consent, and the child at once made a hearty meal of what she had gathered.

Captain Ingraham and Maitland then erected a kind of rude shelter tent, covered with sail-cloth, under which Pearl went to sleep and rested tranquilly until morning.

"I think we had better finish getting things out of the ship before we begin upon our house," said the captain the next morning. "We must bring over the tool chest, all the books we have aboard, all the glass, nails, rope, sail-cloth and tarpaulin, and leave the weather to do the rest. It is quite likely that we shall have another storm in a few days, when the ship will break up and the water-casks and other heavy things be washed ashore."

They went heartily to work, and at the end of three trips had brought away all the lighter articles, all the canned-goods in the cabin, several barrels of potatoes, onions, cabbages, a pair of fowls which had escaped the general destruction, besides stripping the house on deck, galley and cabin of all the light wood they contained, having an eye to the building of their house when they should have finished going to the ship.

The captain saved all his nautical instruments, several muskets, and a brace of revolvers, half a dozen kegs of gun-powder, percussion caps, bullets, shot of all sizes, a dozen sheath-knives and two cutlasses, besides iron belaying-pins, and three crowbars, all of which would form quite an arsenal in case they met with any enemies on the island, which was by no means likely.

Then they paused for dinner, which they both prepared, little Pearl coming to them when it was ready, her golden hair decked out with sea-weeds, and a wreath of bright shells upon her head.

She looked like some water nymph, and Captain Ingraham looking at her, said:

"Ah, Maitland, she is indeed a Pearl, and you have rightly named her."

"She is more precious than any pearl of the ocean," returned Maitland, "for she is the pearl of my heart, my home, my life!"

"And The Pearl of the Pacific," said the captain, gallantly. "Bless her, say I!"

CHAPTER V.

THE PEARL AND HER EDUCATION.

The next day was occupied as before, but shortly after noon the waves began to rise so high, and the wind to be so blustering, that the captain did not think it safe to go out to the vessel any more until the weather grew calmer.

He and Maitland set to work, therefore, and laid the foundation for a house, digging holes and setting in poles, which they cut from the trees on the island.

When four of these had been firmly imbedded in the soil, the men drove in a row of stakes between them, rising to the height of about three feet from the ground, after which they cut notches in the four uprights, and fastened in four more poles at right angles to them.

These were in turn secured by rope, both to the upright and the stakes, and then a lot more were laid across, from side to side, to form the flooring of the house.

No nails had been used as yet, for the two workers wished to save them until it was absolutely necessary, there being portions of the structure where they would be needed more than at present.

When a good, thick, double-flooring had been laid, Captain Ingraham smoothed the poles off with a plane, filled in the chinks with clay, and then covered the whole with a thick layer of cocoanut husks, there being an abundance of the nuts on the island.

Then the work of walling up the house was begun, the poles being used for the inside, the boards they had brought from the ship being designed to go over them.

By dark two sides had arisen half-way to the top of the poles, places being left for one window on each side, the sashes taken from the ship's cabin being intended to fit into the holes, which were measured accordingly.

The next two days remained stormy, and the work on the house progressed rapidly, the walls being completed to the tops of the poles, places being left open for a door and windows.

Before boarding the house over the two builders decided to put a roof upon their house, and as a conical one was the easiest to build, that was the shape determined upon.

Climbing to the top of the walls they inserted a number of poles in between the two upper rails of each wall, having shaped the ends with their axes so that they would stand up at a sharp angle.

They placed a stout pole upon the floor of the house, and rested the ends of the rafters upon it until all had been firmly fastened together, the captain crawling up to the top to perform that labor.

Then a great number of twigs were twined in and out

between the poles, the thatch being placed in a thick layer on top, and fastened down with slats weighted by heavy stones from the beach.

One side of the house was then boarded up before dark, and it already began to assume the look of a dwelling, the roof hanging over about a foot, so as to shed the water which would fall upon it during the rainy season.

The next morning the waves ran so high and beat with such fury upon the vessel that before an hour had passed it was broken upon the rocks, and the fragments and much of the cargo were washed ashore, the two castaways securing many things which would be of value to them.

"There has been a storm at sea," said the captain, "and this is the effect of it. The poor Neptune will go to pieces, but I am glad we were able to save something."

There were many signs that the storm was approaching, and hastily closing the door and windows of their half-built dwelling with sail-cloths, the islanders sought its conclusion.

It was well they did so, for in a little while the storm passed over the island, a drenching rainstorm pouring down upon them.

The captain had taken the precaution not only to put the floor of the house considerably above the ground, but had also dug a ditch all around, which carried the rain away and prevented the structure from being undermined.

The rain lasted all the afternoon, but the castaways had taken such pains that they were perfectly secure and dry, the time being spent in making things which would be needed in the house.

They had tables and chairs, but no beds, and it was in putting up three good bunks that much of the afternoon was spent, a few cupboards and lockers being placed at convenient corners.

The next day was devoted to partitioning off a small room for Pearl, putting in windows and doors, boarding up the walls, and otherwise rendering the house habitable.

A companion-ladder from the ship made a good stoop to the house, the captain fastening a railing to it upon either side, fastening the whole thing firmly to the house, and laying down a broad, flat stone at the foot.

The ship was completely broken up, but many things came ashore which were useful to the shipwrecked party, and they appropriated them forthwith.

The house was made comfortable within and attractive without, the captain having transplanted a number of vines, which would, in time, clamber all over it and add to it looks.

It was a very comfortable dwelling, having glass windows, doors that could be locked, and being provided with beds, stove, furniture of all sorts, hanging book shelves,

paintings, closets and lockers, and, in short, nearly everything which could make it a pleasant dwelling.

There were clothes for all, and the materials for mending them when they needed it, arms and ammunition, books to read, seeds to plant in the ground, chickens to breed, and bring them a flock of feathered beauties, provisions to last for a long time, and many other things which they would not have known how to do without.

A year or two passed, and the castaways were still upon the island, their home being still attractive to them, though they hoped one day to return to their native land.

Crops had been planted, and yielded in abundance; the original pair of fowls had grown to a hundred, the house had been improved and enlarged, a stockade being placed around it, making a yard for the fowls, and much had been done to make it even more comfortable than at first.

The islanders had explored all the neighboring islands, a light canoe built by the captain serving to take them around, Pearl nearly always accompanying them.

There were several islands having lagoons in the center, and Pearl used often to propel a light raft over the unruffled bosoms of these inland seas while the waves were rolling tumultuously within.

When five years had passed by, Pearl began to ask questions which made Maitland long for home, and to wonder whether he should ever see it again.

He had taught the child to read, and she devoured eagerly all the books which the house contained, and when these were read and reread, seeking to know more of that great world outside from which she was secluded.

Maitland told her all her history, how she might have come into a goodly property had she remained in the world, told her of her cousin, Archie Mellen, the beautiful house he lived in, the kind-heartedness of her uncles, and many more things which the child treasured up in her memory.

To the two men, heart-sick and weary, longing for home with all the yearning of which man is capable, this bright, innocent girl was a treasure, and it would have been hard to say which loved her the most, her father or the captain.

The latter pointed out the stars in the heavens, and told her their names, talked to her of the bright moon and its influence on the tides; told her all he knew about the sun, the winds, the currents of the sea, and all the wonders of the deep, opening to her, in fact, a very store-house of knowledge, and filling her young mind with treasures of inestimable value.

She never expressed discontent at her secluded life, but would sometimes open her large, expressive eyes, and say that she would like at some day to see the rest of this beautiful world, and ask if she would have long to wait.

The two heart-weary men never let her see their longing,

but always appeared to be satisfied, telling her that some time she should see the world, and learn to love it, but the time was not yet, and she accepted this assurance in simple faith, and never once willingly caused them pain, though often, unknown to herself, she caused them to yearn agonizingly for the home they had left.

There came a time when the poor father's heart burst at last and he gave up the struggle with a sigh, bidding his friend to love and cherish the poor waif left to his charge, and if ever, by the providence of God, he should reach home, to restore to the child her rights and watch over her as a father would.

To Pearl the mystery of death was an unknown thing, but in her heart she could not feel sorrow, as at the last she seemed to feel that her father had been delivered and that he would be happier where he had gone than even in this earthly paradise where he had lived so long.

Maitland was laid away to rest beneath the trees, and the captain devoted himself more than ever to the young girl so strangely left in his charge, resolving that, should he ever see his native land again, Pearl would want for nothing, not only for her father's sake, but for her own.

Thus the time passed and the Pearl of the Pacific was almost a woman, being seventeen years of age, lithe and active as a deer, beautiful as an houri and pure as a lily, her love for the captain being only short of that for her father and another whom she had never seen, but had often pictured in her imagination as one that was manly and lovable, that other being no other than Archie Mellen, her cousin, and with her heir to an immense fortune.

CHAPTER VI.

TWO WAYS OF TELLING A STORY.

Wayman Husted, the wealthy merchant, was seated in his elegantly furnished library, just off the sumptuous drawing-room, one evening after dinner, when the footman announced that two seafaring men wished to see him.

"Sailors?" gasped the man; "two sailors to see me?"

"They look like sea captains, sir, and one of 'em said his name was Billow, of the ship Westbrook."

"Westbrook, of the Billow, you mean, idiot; Show the gentlemen in here at once."

"Gentlemen!" muttered the footman, as he retired. "The Lord forgive me for callin' the like o' them gentlemen. I wonder if there's any news of Master Archie? He's a gentleman now, and I was sorry to have him go away, though I think this old grimsides is glad enough."

When the footman had shown in the two sailors, who were none other than Westbrook and Hodge, he retired, and Husted, to make sure that no one was listening, closed the door himself, and drew a heavy curtain across it, thus shutting out all sound.

"Well?" he said, in an excited whisper.

"The thing is done," said Westbrook.

"And we've come for the balance," added Hodge.

"The proofs!" gasped Husted. "I must have the proofs. Without them I can claim nothing."

"We have here," said the captain, taking a roll of documents from his coat pocket, "the affidavits of the captain, first and second mates, cook, steward and all the seamen yet alive of the ship Billow—that your nephew, Archie Mellen, was killed by savages on an island in the Pacific, latitude and longitude given."

"Was it an accident?"

"It was, and I lost two good men by it, and came near losing others, the cabin boy being among the missing, though the sharks got him instead of the savages."

"Cabin boy? That was young Preston, was it not?"

"It was, and old Preston is as mad as a hatter about it, but, confound the luck, I couldn't help it; I tried to stop the boy, but he jumped into the water in spite of me. He was very much attached to young Mellen."

"That doesn't concern me. You have done your work, and that is sufficient. Let me see the papers."

The villain handed his employer the affidavits, and also the log of the Billow, which he read rapidly, and with evident satisfaction.

"Who is this second mate, John Norton, that makes this mark? Can't he write?"

"No, and so he signs with an 'X.' He's a half crazy cuss, a bad man when in liquor, and as obstinate as the deuce. He wanted us to pay him for the job."

"You surely did not tell him anything about it?" said Husted, turning as pale as death.

"Not we, but the imp suspected much, and guessed more. He swore that we had murdered the two boys, and swore to get even with us on their account, for he liked 'em a good deal. He said he'd go back on us."

"But this affidavit?"

"After he had made that he said to me and Hodge that he would declare it a fraud, and split on us if we did not divide with him. There ain't nothing to split, 'cause the boys and our two men was lost just as those papers say, but he's a troublesome pup, and may try to blackmail ye."

"Let him try it once, and I will put him in jail."

"I wouldn't do that, sir," said the villainous skipper, slyly, "for then the cuss will make you more trouble. Give him all he wants to drink, and you will quiet him."

"But you said he was a bad man when in liquor."

"So he is if he can't get any more, but if you fill him up tight, and keep him so until some shippin' agent comes along and claps him aboard some vessel bound to China or Japan, he'll be all right."

"You must take care, yourselves, that he does not bother me, and I, myself, shall refuse him admission. You must settle the matter between yourselves, for I can't meddle with it. If it is necessary to give him money to stop his noise, give it to him."

"But he wants too much; if he was reasonable, I wouldn't mind giving him something to stop him bothering, but he ain't satisfied with a little. He wants a good deal."

"Well, well, it's nothing to me. Get rid of the fellow in your own way. You know what to do with him, I guess, so that no one need be the wiser. Here is your money, and now don't let me see you again, unless I should want you to swear again as to the statements contained in these affidavits."

"Then if Norton does come you won't pay no attention to him?"

"Not the slightest. My servants shall have orders not to let him enter the house."

"Good enough. Good-night, sir."

The two scoundrels took their money and departed, Mr. Husted calling the footman after they had gone, and giving him his instructions.

Half an hour later the door-bell was rung lightly, and the gorgeous footman admitted a gentlemanly-looking man, who, though by no means elegantly dressed, appeared to be a person of education and good-breeding.

He seemed perfectly sober and self-possessed, although his face was pale and careworn.

"Tell Mr. Husted, please, that John Norton, second mate of the ship Billow, desires to see him."

The footman had had his orders, and meant to obey them, notwithstanding that he could not see why his master should refuse to see such a gentlemanly-appearing man as this caller.

His curiosity was excited, however, and so he said, still standing by the door and barring the man's advance:

"That was Master Archie's ship, was it not, sir?"

"It was, and it is of him that I wish to speak."

"He is not well, sir? I feared as much when he did not, himself, come to the house, first of all, to tell of his safe arrival."

"You were fond of the young gentleman?"

"Indeed I was, sir, and sorry would I be to hear any bad news of him."

"Tell your master I wish to see him."

"Sorry, sir, but master is not at home." *

"When will he be?"

"Couldn't say. It might not be for all night. He is very hard to catch at these times."

"Are you telling me the truth?" asked Norton, looking the servant full in the face. "Your young master, Archie Mellen, has been foully betrayed by two scoundrels, and I wish to acquaint Mr. Husted with the facts of the case. Show me to him."

"What has happened to Master Archie, sir? I was afraid it was something bad."

"There has been an attempt on his life, and I fear it has been successful. That villain, Westbrook, cannot always humbug me, and this time I escaped him."

"Why, sir, he was here this very night, sir, but I don't know as I ought to let you in, for the master gave orders——"

"He did? Then I will go in! Stand aside, if you have any love for your young master, and let me pass."

Jack Norton swept past the frightened footman, and entered the library, Husted having no idea that he was in the house.

"Your nephew, Archie Mellen, has been foully dealt with, Mr. Husted," cried he, "and I have come to warn you against two villains, the master and mate of our vessel, the Billow."

"I am already aware of the unfortunate death of my poor nephew," began Husted, when Norton stopped him.

"They don't know whether he's dead or not," cried the man. "They abandoned him on an island which is usually uninhabited, but which at the time was occupied by a lot of negroes. There has been treachery here I tell you, because these villains made no attempt to save your nephew from being captured."

"I am satisfied with the account I have received of this affair, and care for no other. You are Mr. Norton, I suppose, and my servant has disobeyed my express commands."

"He could not help himself. I tell you that these men have lied to you. They never once went back to see if they could save Archie or his friend, Phil Preston, who escaped from the sharks and went to find his friend. Mr. Preston will not treat this matter so lightly, and I shall inform him this very night of the villainy of these men. It was preconcerted, beyond a doubt."

The schemer trembled, for if this man were to tell him story to Mr. Preston the villainy of Westbrook and Hodge would leak out, and thus to shield themselves, would expose him.

Archie might be still alive, as this man suggested; and in that case, while the two lesser villains would be innocent of murder, his own motives would be declared and ruin would stare him in the face.

This man, who seemed so thoroughly in earnest, must be

silenced, or there was no knowing what disastrous results might follow in the event of his speaking out.

"Let us talk over this matter quietly," said Husted, "for I am convinced you have reason on your side. Let me pour you out a glass of wine," for a decanter and glasses stood on the table, close at hand.

"No, no. I will not touch the accursed stuff," cried Norton, in horror. "I know its power too well, and I need all my senses. I tell you that these men are guilty of murder in their hearts, although not in deed. They have been hired to do this thing, and poor Phil has suffered through his love for Archie. I do not know who has employed them, but as I live, I will tear the secret from them. I am going now to tell Preston, for I mean to move heaven and earth to punish these villains."

Then he hastily left the room, and as Husted heard the front door slam behind his excited visitor, he sank back in his chair as pale as death, and gasped in agony:

"I am lost, lost!"

CHAPTER VII.

PHIL TELLS ARCHIE A TRUE STORY.

Let us return to our hero and see how he fared among the fierce islanders into whose hands he had fallen.

It was as much a surprise to the crew of the boat as to him, to see a horde of half-naked blacks suddenly rush out and assault them most furiously.

The sailors retreated at once, one of the crew having received his death wound; but Archie, drawing his sheath-knife, sprang behind a tree and waited for the enemy to come up.

He knew that if he started to run, that more than likely an arrow would be stuck in his back, and he preferred to run the risk of facing the savages at close quarters than of getting picked off at long range.

The negroes did not notice him, but pursued the others to the water's edge, as we have seen, and the boy, finding himself deserted, adopted the very wise plan of departing at once, and not waiting for the return of the dusky horde.

He struck off into the woods in a direction that would lead him to the shore, for he thought that he might be able to reach the ship without being observed.

He could hear the shouts of the negroes, and once when he was right in sight of the sea, came very near being discovered.

The boat had been taken on board by that time, and to his horror he saw the sails spread, and the Billow glide away over the sparkling waters like a thing of life.

"I am abandoned, left alone in the midst of savages!

Oh, the heartless wretches to leave me to perish. May heaven punish them for this miserable act."

Then he began to think that the crew might not have been to blame in the matter, and that his being left was purely an oversight, or that the captain may have thought him dead, but in spite of all these reassuring thoughts the feeling would return to him that he had been purposely abandoned.

"May heaven have pity upon them if they have left me willingly to perish," he cried in anguish, as he saw the ship gradually fade from his sight, and then as the canoes began to return he concealed himself in the underbrush so as to avoid discovery by the blacks.

The main party passed within a few feet of where he lay hidden, but very fortunately the blacks did not discover him, and were soon out of hearing, stragglers and all.

"I would just like to know where I am, and how I am going to live," he said, as he walked down to the water, taking care that no one saw him. "If the Billow doesn't come back I shall have to turn Crusoe, and I haven't even a parrot to begin with."

None of the savages appearing, he walked for quite a distance, and the sun was beginning to sink below the horizon when he heard the crackling of twigs in front of him.

He darted back, and then a boyish form appeared in a little glade before him, and to his intense surprise he recognized his old chum Phil Preston.

With a glad cry he sprang forward, crying:

"Phil, you old humbug, how on earth did you come here?"

The other boy looked at him for a moment, and then throwing his cap in the air, caught him in his arms and danced about like a madman.

"Hurrah! Arch, I'm glad I've found you," said Phil. "I knew I should, for I was bound to do it, and I'm mighty glad those dirty savages haven't got you."

"So am I, but what are you doing here? You were not in the boat."

"There's mischief going on here, Arch, and I'm going to find it out. There was a purpose in letting you go ashore, and these villains meant to abandon you in any event. They evidently did not suspect that the savages would be here."

"But why should they abandon me?"

"I don't know if you don't, but I know that those two rascals, Westbrook and Hodge, must have bargained with some one to get rid of you. I'm glad John Norton is aboard, for he'll bring 'em up standing."

"If he will let liquor alone," said Archie, gravely.

"Yes, that's where you're right. I wish he was as afraid

of that as I am of rats. If he was, I'd hold a whisky bottle under his nose every time he came after me."

"What are we going to do, Phil, if they don't come after us?"

"Wait for some other ship, I suppose. I've got a pistol and some cartridges, and if the savages come after us we can scare them off, but I'd like to know how we are going to build a house, or live, or do anything, the way we are fixed."

"I give it up, Phil, and there goes the sun down behind the ocean. Do you feel sleepy?"

"No, indeed. There's a good big tree, suppose we go and sit under it; we can spin yarns until we fall asleep, and then to-morrow we shall have to hit on some plan. You've got a knife?"

"A sheath-knife, yes. So have you, and a pistol besides. We've both got matches and our clothes. That's all. Not a very heavy outfit, surely."

"Never mind, Arch, we might be worse off than that, so don't let's worry. It is not cold, and I don't suppose there are any wild beasts about. So there won't be any trouble about going to sleep when we get ready."

"Not a bit. Tell me a story, Phil. You were always good at them."

"True or made up?"

"True, of course; those are always the best."

"Well, let me see. Oh, yes. I'll tell you about a young fellow I once knew. He was awfully rich, but he didn't know it, but in case he died before he became of age he wouldn't get anything at all, the fortune going to an uncle of his."

"Very well; what happened?"

"This uncle was terribly fond of money, and hadn't a very big conscience, for he not only never let the boy know about his fortune that was coming to him, but plotted to have him killed."

"There had originally been two heirs, the fellow I speak of and another, a girl and his own cousin, but she was lost at sea, and nobody has heard of her for ten or twelve years. She must be married, understand, before she is twenty-one, or the money will go to this friend of mine."

"Now, the uncle was so desperate that, fearing his nephew would discover something about this will which nearly every one knew about, he determined to get the boy out of the way."

"He was very fond of the sea, the young fellow was, and a good sailor, too, so the uncle had no trouble in inducing him to take a voyage, and where should he go but upon one of the vessels that my dad is interested in, and I was aboard myself."

"The captain and mate were regular ruffians, and they agreed, for a good, round sum, to leave the boy on a desolate

island, and then say he was dead, for, bad as they were, they didn't like to commit murder."

"It so happened that I overheard them plotting, but I never tumbled to it that it was my friend that they meant, for they didn't mention his name once, but only said 'him' all the while."

"Well, we came to the island, and this boy was taken ashore, and still I never tumbled. I wanted to go, too, but the second mate frightened me with a rat, and I was left aboard."

"A lot of savages attacked the sailors, and they left in a mighty hurry, without stopping to help my friend, whom I suddenly found out, from what I heard, was the fellow the two ruffians meant to get rid of all the time."

"Then I just jumped overboard, and hollered out to the second mate to look out for those two wretches, because there was treachery done against my friend, and that 1—"

"This is my story that you are telling me, Phil," cried Archie, in great excitement. "You have discovered the villainy of those two men, and have come to join your life with mine. Why didn't you stay aboard and expose them?"

"You think it is a pretty good story, don't you? I wouldn't have believed it myself if I hadn't got it from headquarters."

"But why didn't you stay upon the ship?"

"And leave you here all alone? What sort of boy do you think I am? No, sir, I made up my mind to help you all I could. It only came over me just like a flash, at the last moment, that it was you they meant, and then the only thing I could get into my head was that I must go and help you out."

"You're a good fellow, Phil, and I don't know as you could have done any better. If you had remained on the ship—"

"I would have spit out all I knew and then been quietly knocked on the head some dark night and chucked overboard, and those two precious rascals would have told my dad that I had met with a sad accident. Tell me now, old fellow, that I have done the very best that could have been done under the circumstances."

"Indeed you have, Phil, and I am ever so glad that you are here with me. It would have been dreadful to be here all alone, and you are first-rate company."

"I tell good stories, don't I?"

"If they are all as interesting as this one I could listen to you all night."

"Yes, and blow me up for keeping you awake. We may see the ship again to-morrow, for Joe Norton will make a fuss and oblige those fellows to turn back."

"No, no, Phil, my lad, we must not hope that, for if they think that he knows too much they will—"

"Knock him on the head?"

"No, but ply him with liquor and steal away his brains. They have a power over him which he cannot break down."

"It's a pity, for he's a first-class man if he would only keep sober. It seems, then, that we are booked to stay upon this island for some time to come!"

"There seems to be no help for it, and we must make the best of our situation."

"Well, it's mighty rough, but I'll do my share of making things lively. I've got a pistol, and that ought to keep things agoing."

"Now, then, tell me one of your good old-fashioned yarns, old fellow, and when you finish I'll drop off to sleep."

"That's rather a back-handed sort of compliment, but I guess you mean all right. I'll give you another true yarn, and I guess you'll fancy it almost as much as the first."

CHAPTER VIII.

A BATCH OF MOST INTERESTING NARRATIVES.

"There was once a man, a sea captain by the way," began Phil, "who was named West, Captain West, who lived by the side of a big brook. His name was West, and he lived by a brook. You are still awake?"

"Yes, to be sure I am," answered Archie. "This man was afterwards called Westbrook, was he not?"

"Now you just wait. I am going to tell this story in my own way. This man West was an old villain, and had been a smuggler, and, in a small way, a sort of pirate, besides being a hard customer to deal with, a regular skinflint and tough nut, so to speak.

"He had been suspected more than once of insuring worthless vessels and cargoes for a large amount and sending out scratch crews, which were generally lost in mid-ocean or off the coast.

"He had often insured sawdust as flour and sand as sugar, for, like the other man I told you about, his soul was so small that he could easily lose it in a corner of his watch-pocket, and he was consequently up to all sorts of mean tricks by which to make money, which was his only ambition.

"He had been in the African slave trade, and being in some danger of having his neck stretched, had changed his name so that people would not know him."

"There was a vessel called the Neptune which he chartered and filled with a cargo not worth a hundred dollars, but which he insured for five thousand, engaged a captain and crew, and sent them to the Pacific.

"The captain was a good man, and didn't know about the villainy of West, who, unknown to him, had scuttled the ship, and then calked up the hole very lightly.

The ship was never heard from, and it was supposed to have been lost with all on board, though when she went down no one can tell, as not one of the crew or passengers has ever been seen.

"There was upon the Neptune a man called Maitland, with a little child of five years, who, had she lived, would have come into a large property which some one, I don't know who, had left to her."

"Maitland?" repeated Archie. "Surely I have heard that name before. Why, yes, my mother's sister married a man of that name. I remember hearing it occasionally, though I never saw my uncle."

"Don't interrupt me," said Phil. "I see my way now better than I did before. This man, West, was hired by a certain bad man in New York to get rid of an heiress just as he was lately employed to put an heir out of the way."

"The heiress is my little cousin, Pearl Maitland, and being out of the question, my uncle has now conspired to be rid of me so that he can possess all the property. Oh, the villain! Why didn't you tell me this before?"

"Because I didn't know all the connections until now. I never supposed that you were anything to the Maitlands. I haven't got through with my story yet."

"Go on, but you might as well call this man Westbrook, for I know who you mean."

"I was just coming to that, my dear friend. In England he was known as West, but when he went to America to escape certain embarrassments, which the lawmakers of the tight little island wished to put upon him on account of his having very innocently transferred another's property to his own use and advantage, he changed it to Westbrook, and associated with him a scoundrel by the name of Hodge-son, who——"

"This Hodge, as you call him, had been implicated in the matter of the Neptune, whose captain, though dead, was greatly traduced until it was learned through a clerk of West, a man of a troubled conscience, that he was entirely innocent of the charges against him.

"Of course it was not likely that the captain would risk his own life, and as he had always been known as an upright man, the disclosures made by the clerk served greatly to repair his damaged reputation.

"The man, of course, could have no more of the patronage of Westbrook, and it is said that he died of want. If they had said want of breath induced by a knife wound in the back, delivered by the Hodge already alluded to, they would have been more correct in their statements.

"Now you have the end of my story. Westbrook and Hodge are two furious villains, John Norton is the brother

of the clerk, and but for his terrible love of strong drink, could have exposed the two rascals long ago, but they always continue to get him on board of the same ship with them. Then there is a wicked uncle, a young heir, and a missing heiress, a traduced captain and a father, the latter to be yet accounted for."

"They and the heiress are doubtless dead by this time."

"Not at all. All three may not be alive, but I am certain that one is; you don't remember cousin Pearl?"

"Of course not, for I never saw her, except, perhaps, when we were both children. I have no idea what she would be like if she were living."

"Would you like to have me tell you another story?" asked Phil, persuasively putting his arms around Archie's neck, and gazing up into his face, there being more than light enough to distinguish its expression, the moon having now arisen.

"Mysterious boy, what more have you to tell me?" answered the other with a laugh. "You are a most wonderful story-teller; to-night you quite surpass yourself."

"You told me that you preferred true stories to made-up ones. In fact, I like them better myself, though I cannot always get hold of as good ones as these I have told you to-night."

"There is something else," said Archie, interrupting; "so never mind your preambles, but tell me what it is at once. You are a most provoking young scamp, and if I had a rat——"

"Ugh! don't," cried Phil, frightened at the very mention of the detested animal, and jumping up from his seat. "You haven't got one, have you?"

"No, no, so sit down, like a good fellow, and tell me all you've got to say."

"It isn't very much. While I was roaming about this island, before I came upon you, I ran across the signs of human habitations. There was a well-trodden path, the shrubbery on either side being trimmed in a careful manner, a spring with a tin dipper placed on a flat rock beside it, and from the top of a tree which I climbed I thought I could see a house."

"This is marvelous, but still you might have seen the dwelling of some of those natives."

"No, sir, they are not natives; they have only come here of late. You mean these blacks, of course? Two years ago I passed within ten miles of these islands, and there wasn't a sign of one. They are put down on the chart as being uninhabited. That is the very reason why our rascally captain came here."

"Well, did you see anything else?"

"I did. I saw several goats browsing in the distance, and once I came upon a flock of fowls which looked mighty like domestic chickens to my uncultivated eye."

"Which facts, taken together, leads you to think that there may be white people—castaways, upon this very island."

"Exactly, and more than that, these people may possibly have come from a vessel named the Neptune."

"Phil Preston, if you know anything positive, tell it to me at once," cried Archie, seizing the boy in his arms and turning him around, so that the moon shone full in his handsome young face.

Phil laughed, and gave Archie a playful box in the ear, saying:

"I wish I did, old fellow, but my yarn is deficient in solid facts now. If I had waited a few days I might have been able to fill it up for you and make a good story of it."

"All I know is that the Neptune was probably lost in the Pacific; that people are frequently saved from shipwrecks, and live and die on unknown islands, and that therefore it is barely possible that the passengers of the Neptune may have reached these shores."

"Pshaw! There are hundreds of islands in the Pacific, any one of which they might have landed upon had they landed anywhere, which I doubt very much. Twelve years have passed since then, and we surely would have heard from them in that time."

"I don't know about that. My father had an old fellow in his employ who was missing for twenty-one years, and nearly all that time he was on an island in the South Pacific, where no vessels ever went, and if a ship hadn't been driven completely out of her course and made this island, he might have been there to this day."

"That is only an isolated case."

"Oh, I could tell you a dozen that I have heard about, but I am getting sleepy, and I think we had better turn in. In the morning we will explore this place and perhaps find a boat of some kind to take us over to the other islands in the group."

"We must first of all find out whether there are any white people here or not, for I am greatly interested to know if your suppositions——"

A snore from Phil showed him that the boy was fast asleep in his arms, so laying him gently upon the mossy bank, he threw himself alongside, and was soon fast asleep and dreaming of mysterious islands, shipwrecks, villainous captains, and grasping mates, the whole being strangely mixed up with incidents of his own life, and Phil's, whom he seemed to think had turned to a rat and was biting him on the ear.

Then he suddenly awoke and saw that it was broad daylight, and that Phil was standing over him, tickling him with a long blade of grass.

"Morning watch?" called Phil. "Git up and let us skir-mish around for our breakfast."

"I did not think I had slept an hour," said Archie, rubbing his eyes and getting upon his feet, feeling a little stiff from having slept out in the open air all night.

"Well, here is another day before us," he said, little knowing what remarkable developments it would bring forth.

"And we are ready for it," said Phil, catching him by the hand and dancing him off toward the shore. "So come and see what Mother Nature has set out for our breakfast."

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE TRACK AT LAST.

As John Norton walked down the steps of the rich merchant's house, he saw two men passing, but paid no particular attention to them, taking his own way in the direction of Mr. Preston's.

He soon came up with the men, who separated to let him pass, and he walked between them, suspecting nothing, but thinking only of his own plans.

Suddenly he felt himself seized by the two strangers, one of whom clapped a thick gag in his mouth, the other pressing his arms close to his side and preventing him from moving.

Then a cloak was thrown over his head, a heavy cord passed around his body, and thus bound and muffled he was hurried away, put into a carriage, and driven off at a rapid pace.

He could not cry out or make any resistance, was unable to tell whither he was going, or if the two men had accompanied him, as he heard no sound, and had been so thrown into the carriage as to be unable to move hand or foot.

"Those villains have got wind of my intentions," he thought, "and are trying to get me out of the way, but if I live I will tell the story to every man I meet. I have told Phil a good deal already and in such a way that he could not fail to understand what I meant, and Captain West will have to look out for himself when Phil gets back."

The carriage was driven very rapidly for upwards of two hours, and the prisoner was beginning to think that it would never stop, when it suddenly came to a halt; he was taken out, carried to some distance and unbound, and then he discovered that he was in the cabin of some vessel.

"What does this mean?" he demanded of his captors, who were totally unknown to him.

"Oh, nothing at all, except that we needed a man and thought you'd be as good as any. Take a drink and call it square."

It was on his lips to refuse, but one of the men put a glass of liquor to his mouth, and, before he knew it, he had swallowed the fiery potion, and was ready for another glass, which was not long in forthcoming.

Other glasses followed the first two, until the poor fellow rolled under the table unconscious.

"That's all right," laughed one of the men. "Cap'n West'll pay us well for this job. We managed it neatly, didn't we?"

"You're right, we did. What a lush he is anyhow. He ain't got no more spunk than a mouse when you stick a drop o' liquor under his nose."

When the unfortunate victim awoke the vessel was upon the open sea, with no land in sight, and pitch darkness all around, so that he must have slept fully twenty-four hours after his debauch.

He walked out of the cabin, and going upon deck, looked around him, but, of course, could not get his bearings, there being no stars in sight.

He walked up to a sailor leaning against the rail, and said:

"Where are we going, my man, and what is this vessel called?"

The man said nothing, and Norton repeated the question in a tone of authority:

"I am on the lookout, sir, and am ordered to speak to no one," replied the fellow, and that was all he would say, never opening his lips after that.

When Norton approached the other men on deck they avoided him, and he could not get near enough to speak to them, so, disgusted at his bad luck, he took two or three turns upon the quarter-deck, and then asked the helmsman how he headed:

"Nor-nor'-west, sir, same as ever," responded the man.

"H'm, that's bad," thought Norton. "We can't be going to the Pacific on that course. Do you know where we are bound, my man?" he said aloud, addressing the man at the wheel.

"Couldn't tell ye, sir; don't know myself; was shipped at the last minute."

"Well, this is a pretty state of affairs," said the officer to himself. "One man won't speak and the other doesn't know. I wonder what is the matter. I'd like to know whether old West had any hand in this or not. I'd bet it was through his orders that I was waylaid."

"Is that you, Mr. Norton," said a voice from the main deck at that instant.

"Yes, sir, but I'll be hanged if I know you."

"That's funny, for I'm your captain. Will you stand the rest of this watch, since you are on deck? You're the

(Continued on page 20.)

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CHOICE READING MATTER.

With their three-year-old baby in a go-cart, George Palmer and wife walked 350 miles from Ashecroft, B. C., to the Nechaco Valley, in the northern wilds of the province, to take up land for farming purposes. Palmer had obtained the 160 acres of free land that he went after, and is now busy making himself and his family a home.

Two negroes in Mobile, Ala., Ransom Delvach and Walter Scott, not being inclined to work for money, tried to get it in an easier way. They held up a deaf and dumb man, and tried robbing him of seven dollars. They were tried and convicted, and each sentenced to ninety-nine years' imprisonment.

Persons who are inclined to a feeling of enmity toward those little animals, the hedgehogs, should stop to consider some of their characteristics before condemning them to destruction, for in many ways they are of great usefulness. Gardeners tell us that a hedgehog in the garden will destroy all the ruinous insects that make such ravages on the fresh young vegetables, and the worms, slugs and snails cannot live where the hedgehog has full liberty. In the kitchen and cellar the little animal is also of great benefit, as he keeps them clear of black beetles and many other annoying insects that are a menace to the good housekeeper. So stay your hand before injuring the harmless little animal that may be of value to you.

Concerning the kiss and its origin opinions differ. Some wise men declare that the kissing habit is one of the remains from cannibalism, and that its beginning was nothing more than the carnivorous impulse to bite. When primitive man gave a kiss he expressed an affection equal to his love for his foods. The kiss meant, "I love you well enough to eat you." It is certain that kissing was one of the most ancient customs. It was current among the ancient Jews, and is well known among all Orientals. Nor is it to disappear. Exalted by the dying act of more than one historical hero, sung by all the poets from Solomon onward, the kiss is here to stay. The world could not do without it.

Character from handwriting and palmistry we are acquainted with, but a Paris contemporary announces that dispositions can be gauged from cigars. The man who smokes, we learn, is easily recognized. His lips show it, without his speaking. He who fixes his cigar deeply in the mouth is of

a nature resolute, sceptical and abrupt; one who bites off the end of his cigar is careless, thoughtless or listless. When the cutter is used to nip off the end, the smoker may be considered as a man of caution. The user of the amber holder may be considered a delicate person. The man who smokes his cigar to the end is a faithful friend, a constant husband and of a persevering nature. If one is in the habit of throwing away the cigar when only half smoked he may be considered fickle, blase and a trifler. Furthermore, characteristics can be deduced from the habit of allowing the cigar to die out. Such a person suffers from want of memory. He may have aptitude for mathematics, but he is not selfish.

RIB TICKLERS.

"Ever been arrested before?" asked the judge. "No," snapped the woman at the bar; "I've only been a suffragette two days."

"Are you going to throw rice after the bride and groom?" "I should say not," replied the thrifty friend. "If we have any groceries to toss away we'll box 'em up and send 'em around when they start housekeeping."

Mistress—Did you remember to feed the cat every day during my absence? Servant—Every day but one, ma'am. Mistress—And didn't the poor thing have anything to eat all day? Servant—Oh, yes, ma'am. She ate the canary.

"That house I have taken from you," said the dissatisfied tenant, "is horribly draughty. When I am sitting in the middle of the room my hair blows all over my head. Can't you do something for the windows?" "Don't you think, sir," replied the house agent, suavely, "it would be easier and cheaper for you to get your hair cut?"

Mr. Spinks—"Why, under heavens, did you give Billington that cotton umbrella? He'll never bring it back." Mrs. Spinks—"The only other one in the rack was silk." "You should have given him that." "Humph! If he wouldn't return the cotton one, why should he return the silk one? Tell me that, Mr. Spinks." Mr. Spinks—"The cotton one was his."

"Can you tell me what is the matter with my machine?" asked the man in the stalled auto. "Certainly," answers the other. "Your carburetor is out of order, your sparking plug is broken, the gear is tripped and one of the tires is blown out." "And how shall I fix it?" "I don't know how to fix it. I am only a critic."

Gunner—Confound it! My wife has the habit of going through my vest every night. Guyer—Tell you what to do, old man. Put a piece of cheese in one of the pockets. Gunner—Cheese? Why, you must be crazy. That would attract mice. Guyer—Just so. If your wife should ever see a mouse jump out of that vest she would never go near it again.

A Vassar girl married a Kansas farmer. Two weeks later a cyclone made the happy pair a friendly call. It cavorted around the premises, ripping up the fences, scattering the haystacks and playing horse with the barn, but when it looked through the open window it drew back in alarm. There lay the bride's first pan of biscuits. "I ain't feeling very strong this morning," murmured the cyclone. And with another glance at the terrible pan it blew itself away.

A CRUISE ON AN ICEBERG

By John Sherman.

We were due south of Cape Horn, and about 100 miles from land (says Peter Nelson, an old whaler), when the wind died away on us one morning and left us heaving on a heavy swell, with five or six big icebergs in full view. The calm came about ten o'clock in the morning, and at that time the nearest berg, which I will venture to say covered as much space as a village of 2,000 inhabitants, was four miles off. Before noon we had drifted toward each other until we were only two miles apart; but then the same current seemed to catch us, and we drifted away to the west in company, neither increasing nor lessening the two miles' distance. The day was raw and chilly, though the sun shone brightly, and the air was so clear that the men on our decks soon made out some animals moving on the berg. It had swung around a bit, showing a new face, and when the captain had taken a look with his glass, he informed us that he could make out two polar bears and several small animals, which he believed to be Arctic foxes. We had been without fresh meat for many months, and an appeal was made for one of the boats to be permitted to go off and kill the bears.

The weather had a steady look, and after some hesitation the captain permitted the third mate to take four men and pull off. The name of the mate was Mr. Wharton, and the men were George Smith, George Olsen, Bill Green and myself. We took along muskets and harpoons, and pulled away, rejoicing that we were to have an adventure.

There was but little field ice, and we had no difficulty in avoiding the occasional great cakes and pieces broken from the bergs. We pulled with such a will that we were soon up to the berg, and it did not take us long to find out that the captain was right. On a sort of shelf, thirty or forty feet above the water, we discovered the bears, but as soon as they noted our presence, they scampered along the shelf until hidden behind a projection.

There were a dozen places where the sun was melting the ice so that streams of water were trickling down, and the waves were breaking along the whole side and throwing spray fifteen feet high. I presume some of the lady passengers on an ocean steamer passing two or three miles away might have called it a grand sight, but as we reached the base of the berg it seemed to us to be about as ugly an object as the sea could bear up. We were on the ice side, of course, and as the bears scampered along we pursued until we found their further progress stopped by a high cliff, up which nothing could make its way. We could come up within half pistol-shot, and the mate and Smith were good shots with the musket. How far the bears had been carried on the berg, or how long they had been afloat, it was, of course, impossible to tell; but the mate figured from the wear and tear of the big lump of ice that it had been weeks at sea.

You will mind that the ship was to windward of the berg and two miles away. We had pulled around to the ice side, and were consequently out of sight of the vessel. We had downed the bears and were looking for a place to make the boat fast in order to get at the carcasses, when, as suddenly as if you had clapped the blanket over it, the sun was obscured, there was a sharp puff of wind, and next moment it was snowing as it only snows off dreary Cape Horn at the right season of the year. The whole heavens were overspread in no time, and we could not see the water twenty feet away.

The ship had seen the squall gathering and fired guns for us before we shot the bears, but the booming of the waves around us had shut out all other sounds.

The squall had come up with the run of the waves, so that as soon as we had rounded the berg we found ourselves facing such a whirl of snow as you can scarcely imagine, while the waves began to take on their white crests and to run with greater strength. We knew that the ship could not remain stationary, and that the chances of our running across her in that storm were not on in a thousand, but every man had shut his teeth on the worst when the mate brought out the bottle of whisky from the stern locker and said:

"Now, lads, a pull at the bottle all around and we'll feel better. We are in an awkward fix, to be sure, but I've been in far worse, and am here to prove that I came out all right. Give me a strong stroke and I'll put you aboard of the Vestal in half an hour."

It was wonderful how much his words cheered us up, and we sent the boat ahead as if we had sighted a whale. We had pulled a good four miles from the berg when Mr. Wharton ordered us to cease rowing and, after a drift of ten or fifteen minutes, he said:

"Lads, we have somehow missed the ship, and must make the best of it. The storm won't break for hours yet, and our only hope is to find the big berg again and make fast under its ice. Round with the boat, and let every man keep up a stout heart."

He wasn't sure he had the bearings of the berg, being as we had drifted away to the southwest, but after a long and fatiguing pull, with the flurry so dense that we could not see a boat's length away, we finally heard the breaking of the surf on the berg. We then ran down its north face until we turned the corner, and were soon at the very shelf on which the bears lay dead. Having been cruising among the ice for weeks, our boat was provided with ice anchors, and after a little we made fast, veered the boat to a safe distance and then rode as nicely as you please. The water under the ice of that great floating obstacle was as quiet as it would have been in the ice of a hundred-acre island. It wasn't so very cold, but we had pulled away from the ship, without any preparation, and as the afternoon wore away we found that our cramped quarters were telling against us. Feet, hands and limbs were benumbed, and it was plain that we must have exercise or we would soon be frosted. By the mate's orders the boat was drawn onto the berg, and we got out on secure footing and hauled the craft after us. The mate then told us to scatter along the shelf on which the bears were lying and stretch our legs and swing our arms, and while we were at this he overhauled the stores in the boat.

When we finally gathered around him again he announced that he had found a lantern and a pint of oil, two hatchets, a harpoon, three muskets with powder and ball for twenty rounds, a lot of matches, two tins of ship's biscuit, a keg of water, and there was the whale line on its reel, and the ice anchor to complete the list. We moved along in a body to where the carcasses were lying, and at the projection which had stopped their further flight we began cutting a cave in the ice. The berg was hard as ice can freeze, but our hatchets and harpoons had keen edges, and before darkness settled down, taking turns at the work, we had cut out a cavity seven or eight feet deep by as many broad. It made a capital shelter from the furious snow storm, which still prevailed without the least sign of abatement and as soon as we were sheltered from that we were comparatively warm.

The bodies of the bears had not yet frozen, and Mr. Wharton lighted the lantern and we set to work with our sheath knives to skin and dress them. Our real situation was scarcely referred to by any of us, although each man fully under-

stood how desperate it was. We had biscuit sufficient to last the four for a week or ten days—that is, enough to sustain life for that length of time. If we were compelled to remain on the berg the bear meat would be a godsend to us. Every man had this reflection, but no man gave utterance to his thoughts. We cracked jokes and tried to be cheerful, and, could a sixth man have looked in on us, he would have said we were enjoying ourselves immensely. The big skins were spread on the floor of our ice cave, the carcasses cut up in handy pieces, and when darkness fell upon the ocean we lay down side by side without having eaten or drunk, and were soon asleep. I had knocked about in all sorts of crafts and had sailed in all seas, and peril was no new thing to me. When I lay down I had to admit to myself that the present situation had never been equalled, and I forced my thoughts into other channels. Had I begun figuring on our chances I should have gone wild. I lay next to Mr. Wharton, and perhaps, as I was falling into a doze, I may have whispered something to myself, for he laid his hand on my shoulder, put his mouth close to my ear, and softly said:

"Nelson, whatever you think of the situation, say nothing to any of the rest. The gale is blowing up great guns, and Heaven only knows what may happen to us even before midnight."

After that we all slept, but an hour before daylight we were aroused by such a shock and crash as made us believe that the heavens and the earth had come together. We sprang up with shouts of alarm, no one remembering for the moment just where we were. Then there came more grinding and crunching and crushing, and directly after that all was still except the howling of the gale, and we were driving along as quietly as before.

"We've had a collision with another berg," explained the mate, "and I think all danger has passed."

He advised us to return to our sleep, but every man had had enough, and every eye was wide open when the first signs of daylight appeared. The fall of snow was not so heavy, although we could not have seen a second berg as large as ours half a mile away, but the wind was blowing a lively gale and held steady from the old quarter. The mercury had dropped to zero or lower, but the great skins under us had kept us comfortable through the night. We sat and looked out on the storm and the troubled sea for a long time before any man moved or made a suggestion. Then, when day had fully dawned the mate said:

"Well, men, nothing is ever as bad as it looks at first sight. The storm can't last the day out, and you may be sure the ship will not lot for another whale until she overhauls us. We've got bread and meat, and we'll try for a few."

He was the first man out of the cave. I expected we'd all been preparing ourselves to find the boat smashed to splinters or gone entirely, for when Mr. Wharton called that she was all right, a great load was lifted from our minds. To get a fire we must have wood, and to get wood, as was soon realized, we must sacrifice some portion of the boat. The door to the locker in the stern-sheets was unhinged, and a couple of the men fell to and made shavings and kindlings of it. Then some of the entrails and fat were cut up into small pieces, and we started a fire at the door of our cave. As soon as the kindlings were alight we put on pieces of fat, and there was a cheer all round as the fire began to blaze up and throw out its warmth. Then we fell to, each man for himself, and cut off as much meat as we wanted, and held it over the blaze on splinters. Despite the poor roasting and the absence of salt, we made a hearty meal, and the fire was soon after smothered out.

Although it had been snowing for so many hours, and snow-

ing in a way to have made drifts ten feet high on land, very little of it had remained on the berg, owing, of course, to the high winds blowing over it. The mate gave us leave to scatter for a look around, though warning us against taking any chances, and presently I found myself in his company as we walked part way along the length of the shelf and came to a spot upon which we could climb with a promise of a view to windward. Up we went, making our feet sure at every step and the howling of the gale all the time seeming nearer, and by and by we looked out between two pinnacles and had a square look in the face of the storm. We were not yet at the top of the berg, by any means, but had struck a sort of rift in the center of it and about forty feet above the sea. A more forbidding sight I never looked upon. The sea was in a perfect turmoil, flinging spray almost as high as our faces, and two other bergs, each seemingly as large as our own, were in sight through the haze. One was on what might be called the starboard bow, and the other on the starboard quarter, and the three of us were driving off to the west under the influence of the waves and gale. Above our heads, around the icy pinnacles and steeples, the wind shrieked and screamed and whistled in a way to make one's hair stand up on end.

We scrambled down to the shelf, and thence along to the cave, where we found the other three. They had also obtained a look to windward, and every face was gloomy enough.

Just before dark we lighted our fire again and cooked some more meat, and that night we all slept soundly. The next day dawned bright and clear, with the wind blowing from the south, and before noon the ice most exposed to the sun was thawing. We had a clear sky, and could see for miles around us, and a grand sight it was.

The pack ice had mostly gone off to the west, but there were a score of big and little bergs in view. We kept the break-fast fire going all day as a beacon fire, smothering it down occasionally to make a black smoke, and we rambled about a good deal over the berg. We started up three white foxes, but as we dared not use the muskets for fear that the concussion might work us harm, we made no captures. The night came on tranquil, with the wind going to the west and holding balmy, and we had nothing to disturb us. In the morning, as we were toasting our meat, we felt a tremendous quiver run through the berg, and next moment a good third of it split off with a terrible crash and floated away from us. The loss of this portion gave us a bad list to port, and for half an hour we were in momentary expectation of the berg capsizing. It floated steadily, however, and by and by we were reassured and began to walk about again, while the fire sent up a smoke which could be seen many miles away.

It was about an hour after noon, and the mate was making ready to remove a thwart from the boat to use for kindling, when the Scottish steam whaler, Highlander, suddenly rounded a great berg to the southeast of us, and came into full view of one of the men who had just climbed up for a lookout. She had seen our smoke and had been working toward us for hours. An hour after she was first seen we were aboard of her, and it isn't for the purpose of exaggerating the perils of our adventure that I tell you we had not steamed two miles from the berg when it split in three portions with thunderous sounds, and every portion turned turtle.

We didn't find our ship again, but were eventually landed in Valparaiso, where we got berths aboard of others. The Vestal, as we afterward came to know, searched for us for the best part of a week, and then, feeling that we must have certainly been lost, put up her helm and was off to a new cruising ground, while we were entered on the log book as thousands of others have been.

(Continued from page 16.)

second mate, you know, and the starboard watch has the ship at present."

"I the second mate?"

"To be sure, Mr. Norton. I don't wonder that you have forgotten all about it, for you were jolly tight when you signed the articles. If I hadn't known you were a good man I would never have taken you."

"And what is your name, sir? I really have forgotten it if ever I knew it, which I am not sure of."

"My name is North, Joe North, and this is the Pole Star. We are bound to Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Belgium as we come down; after that back home again."

"Then good-by to my saving those lads," thought the poor victim; "but this voyage cannot last forever, and when I get home I'll set things straight."

The next day he found his name duly signed to the ship's articles as second mate, and he could not swear whether the signature was genuine or a forgery, so cleverly was it done.

There was no help for it now, and as the pay was good he did not complain, but resolved to keep quiet until he reached home again, when he intended to denounce the two villains to Mr. Preston.

The voyage was a long one, and it was a year before he returned to New York once more, his determination as strong as ever.

He had not counted upon the opposition of the two arch-villains to whom he owed his having been sent away to the North, and their plans were already laid to prevent him a second time from exposing them.

Having been at sea so long, he was invited to go with a lot of his ship-mates, when he arrived, to a neighboring saloon and celebrate their safe return.

He declined, knowing too well his weakness, but there was one among them who was determined that he should, and the rest added their persuasions good-naturedly enough, until the poor man was forced to go with them, rather than to appear churlish, and in less than an hour he was again under the influence of the damning stuff which he had not the moral strength to refuse.

The next three or four days formed a sort of half-confused period which he could not entirely account for, being not entirely a blank in his memory, and yet not wholly distinct and clear in his mind, about the only thing he could remember being that he seemed to be drinking a good deal, and vainly trying to reassert his manhood.

At last there ensued a blank of nearly a week, and when he came to himself he found that he was again on the ocean, aboard of a three-masted schooner, bound for the Pacific, and that his capacity was that of able seaman.

That he was going to the Pacific was a source of com-

fort to him, particularly as he discovered, by adroit questioning, that he would be likely to pass within no very great distance of the group of islands where the two boys had been left.

It was not long, however, before he discovered that the vessel was by no means seaworthy, that the men composing the crew were inefficient, and that even the captain was remarkably ignorant and not at all suited for the responsible position he held, the other officers being no better than the common sailors.

Then he realized that this was another piece of rascality upon the part of Westbrook and Hodge, and that beyond a doubt the vessel was never intended to make a port.

There were two or three seamen, and the second mate, who seemed better than the average, and although not good sailors by any means, were good enough fellows, and with these Norton made friends in a short time.

To them he confided his suspicions, and found that they were as much horrified as he was at the villainy of the two plotters.

He told his story to the officer, Mr. Black, and the latter secretly drafted the whole thing upon several sheets of paper, and got Norton to read it over for correction and then sign it.

"Now, you take charge of that," said Black, "and never let it go out of your possession. If we are wrecked, and there is no hope for us, put it in a bottle, and throw it into the sea. If we escape put it into the mail as soon as you reach a port, but if we get to New York first, I will go with you to this man, and see that you are not led away again."

"But these islands! We must make them at all hazards. If not we are lost. The first heavy gale we have will wreck us."

"But the captain has his course and will not deviate from it."

"He must, even if I have to assume command myself."

"Form a mutiny?" said the others in horror.

"If you call protecting our lives against the inefficiency of this man a mutiny, which I do not, that's what it is. Had you rather land safely on these islands or perish?"

"That is a needless question."

"You will find that most of the men are of that opinion, and with caution we can easily talk them over. There are five of us, and then there's the steward, who I know is a good fighter by his looks. The cabin boy does not count for very much, but still we can easily bring him over. Leave him to me."

"Even then the other side outnumbers us, though perhaps I can talk the mate over. He does not seem as bullet-headed as the captain."

"Do so and that will make one more. When we show

the other side what a determined stand we can make they will weaken. Are there any arms or ammunition aboard?"

"Not a bit, and in this as in everything else her fitting is shown to be poor, as if the men who chartered her did not want to spend any money uselessly."

"The boats are poor and would be easily swamped, the sails are rotten, the masts sprung and decayed; there are no extra sails, spars or rigging; the nautical instruments are almost worthless and the cargo simply worthless, though it is put up in valuable cases. The whole thing is a sham for the purpose of making money."

"Then lead us!" cried the second mate, and we will do whatever you say."

"We will," said the others, in a low tone so as not to attract attention to themselves.

"Then stand by to take the word, for in a few days I shall be ready."

CHAPTER X.

PHIL PRESTON MEETS THE PEARL OF THE PACIFIC.

The two boys had no trouble in finding breakfast enough, and what was more to the point they did not run across any of the blacks.

After strolling about for some time they decided to separate and meet upon the other side of the island, Archie to turn to the right and Phil to the left when they reached the further shore.

Phil had traveled through brush and bramble for nearly half an hour and had reached a piece of rising ground that had evidently been cleared by man's hand, when he suddenly came upon a most singular apparition.

This was no less than a young girl, quaintly clad in a close-fitting tunic of soft white fur, a conical cap of the same being perched jauntily upon the top of her head.

She wore neat-fitting, fur-trimmed boots upon her feet, a long fur cloak extended from her snowy shoulders, over which swept a torrent of soft, wavy hair looking like spun gold, wide bands of gold were upon her arms, a string of pearls encircled her swan-like neck, and in her small, shapely ears were fastened little shells, which glistened with pearls.

Her eyes were as blue as the summer sky and as tender as a dove's, her cheeks were fair and just touched with a peachy bloom, her figure was well rounded and not too plump to be obese, she looked the very picture of health, and from her pure, sweet face came no expression but that of perfect innocence and guilelessness.

"Am I awake or dreaming?" said Phil. "What a lovely creature, and how unconcerned she looks."

The girl gave a slight start at the sound of the lad's voice, and then, with a glad smile upon her exquisitely lovely face, she advanced, and holding out her pretty hands said, naively:

"I am so glad you have come. I have waited a long time for you."

"Waited for me?" said Phil, in surprise.

"Yes, for I know by your handsome face, your manly appearance, and your honest expression, that you are he whom I have seen in my dreams, whom I have learned to love from thinking of you so much, though until now I have never seen you and only pictured you in my imagination."

"What on earth does this all mean?" muttered Phil, half audibly. "Who are you, my pretty creature, that seem to know me so well?"

"They call me the Pearl of the Pacific."

"By Jove, then you are well named, for I never saw such a lovely creature in all my life. Excuse my frankness, but you are the most beautiful girl I ever set eyes upon."

"I am glad you think me beautiful," she said, with the greatest innocence and not a particle of affectation. "You are beautiful, though we call men handsome, do we not?"

"Sometimes we do," answered Phil, laughing, "though not in my case, for I'm only a boy and passably good looking, not at all handsome," which latter, though Phil believed it so, was not the strict truth, as he was, for a fact, a remarkably handsome lad.

"But I don't understand," he continued after a pause, "how you come to know me. What is your name?"

"Pearl Maitland, and I am your cousin, cast upon this island many years ago. I have waited for you to come and take me back to that beautiful world of which I remember so little."

"Then you think I am——"

"Archie Mellen, my cousin, the boy I know so well, though I have never seen him."

"But I am not Archie Mellen, I am only his friend and chum. If you call me handsome, I don't know what you would say to him, for I can't hold a candle to him. Why, he's handsomer than a hundred girls, although he can't come up to you. I often wondered what makes him so good-looking, being only a sailor lad."

"Can it be possible?" said Pearl. "I would not believe that there could be two creatures in the world as handsome as you. I am sorry you are not my cousin, for you are so beautiful."

"Hold up," said Phil, blushing crimson. "I don't mind being praised a little, but I can't stand having it laid on so thick. Archie is on this island, and we will go to him. Then you will see how good-looking he is. Is your father here?"

"No, he has gone away," said the girl, sadly. "Poor man,

his heart was broken because no one ever came to take us home. The captain is with me, and has been a father to me for many years."

"The captain of the Neptune? She was wrecked on this island?"

"Yes; but of all on board we three alone were saved. I was but a child of five years at that time, and remember little about it, though I have been told all the circumstances."

"It's lucky, after all, that we came here," said Phil, "for we were as anxious to meet you as you were to see Archie. I am going to meet him; will you come with me?"

"I will go to the beach and wait for you there, though I shall scarcely believe you are not Archie until I see that there are two of you."

"Upon my word I wish I was he."

"What for?"

"So that I could have such a nice girl for a cousin. I'm sure that there'll be no danger of your keeping your share of the property, as far as your marrying goes, and I can give a pretty shrewd guess as to who the happy man will be."

Pearl blushed, and then the two walked along, chatting gayly until they reached the shore, which at this place was rocky and indented with many little bays and coves.

Pearl said she would wait, and Phil at once set out to meet Archie, laughing as he thought of the surprise he would give his old friend.

After he had gone, Pearl wandered about among the rocks, singing to herself and picking up seashells, when, upon coming around a projecting cliff, she saw a large canoe or boat, built of bamboo, stranded upon the rocks.

"I did not see this yesterday," she said. "Could the boys have come in it? No, no, for it would not stand the tumultuous ocean. It looks like the crafts used by the savage islanders I have read about, but what is it doing here?"

She sprang upon it from a rock, and found a soft, white mat, made from a number of goat-skins, spread out upon the bamboo deck.

As she was looking around her and wondering at the presence of the boat in that spot, half a dozen dusky forms sprang up from under the edge of the singular craft and advanced towards her with menacing gestures.

She stamped her foot and commanded them to retreat, which they did a few steps, setting up a howl, which was answered from the cliffs near at hand.

In a few moments the girl was surrounded by the blacks, who made all sorts of hostile demonstrations, though they did not as yet approach very near.

They came swarming up until there must have been at

least two or three hundred of them, all armed with spears, clubs or bows.

They were nearly naked, and as black and greasy as one can imagine, their short wool, thick lips, flat noses, shining teeth and big ears giving them a terrible appearance.

"Stand back!" cried Pearl, drawing her two revolvers from her belt and cocking them. "Stand back, I say, or I will kill the first man who disobeys me."

They could understand her manner, though not her words, and those directly in front of her drew back, not exactly knowing what those two shining tubes in her hands could do.

As she stood thus, in the midst of the treacherous wretches, in whose breasts glowed not a single kind feeling, she looked more singularly beautiful than ever, her danger and her bravery adding fresh charms to her face and form.

As she faced the threatening horde, two or three wily savages crawled upon the boat, and, stealing up behind her, menaced her young life with their terrible weapons.

Those in front, apprehending that their comrades in the rear would take her at a disadvantage, began to advance once more, and already one hideous demon had poised his spear, while another was about to spring upon the boat.

Truly her position was a terrible one, but the instinct of self-preservation was strong in her, and she seemed to look upon these fierce creatures, not as human beings, but as wild beasts, and, indeed, she was not far wrong.

With flashing eyes she advanced a step, and leveling both her weapons, fired one ball from each, point blank, into the scowling crowd.

There was a howl of surprise, and without an instant's hesitation she turned around, and seeing a naked savage advancing upon her with a horrible looking club in his hand, shot him in a second.

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

In quick succession the sharp reports rang out upon the air, and at every report a savage fell dead.

CHAPTER XI.

REUNITED.

The merry-hearted Phil made his way rapidly along the coast, his heart as light as a bird's, and his head fairly in the clouds.

He fairly danced over the rocks and little strips of beach, now dashing through puddles, now springing from rock to rock, and now racing like mad over the shining sands.

When at last he saw Archie approaching, he tossed up his cap, threw a handspring upon the sand, and otherwise showed his deep gratification.

"I've found her, Arch!" he said, seizing his chum's hands and whirling him around like a top.

"Found whom, you madman!" said Archie, breaking loose from the demonstrative fellow.

"The Pearl of the Pacific."

"Well, I'm sincerely glad, but I haven't the remotest idea who that is."

"What would you say if I told you I had seen Miss Pearl Maitland?"

"My cousin Pearl!" cried Archie in amazement. "Impossible!"

"Not a bit of it, my boy. I have seen and spoken to her."

"When?"

"Just now, and that's what made me in such a hurry to find you. She thought I was you, and I might have cut you out, old man, for she said she loved you already, and knew you were as beautiful as the sun."

"Pahaw! What nonsense is this you are talking?"

"No nonsense at all, but facts. Ha, ha, ha! you don't like to be told you are good-looking any more than I do, though you know you are well enough. But, my eyes! you ought to see your cousin; she's as pretty as a picture."

"Where is she?" cried Archie, in great excitement!

"Back there waiting for us."

"Show me the way at once. Did she tell you she was Pearl Maitland?"

"Yes, and declared that I was her cousin, Archie Mel-len."

"She is not alone on the island?"

"No, the captain is alive, but her father died some years since. She was shipwrecked in the Neptune."

"Hurry, Phil, hurry; I am afraid something may happen. Those negroes——"

"We haven't seen 'em this morning yet."

"But we don't know whether they have gone or not. Do go faster, or tell me the right road, and I'll run on ahead."

Poor Philp was running as fast as his legs could take him, and so was Archie, but he was so excited that he thought he could not go half quick enough, and spurred Phil ahead until the boy was almost ready to drop.

"Hold up, Arch," he gasped at length, falling upon the sand and panting for breath. "There isn't such an awful hurry that we should go like two steam engines. The island is not going to be swallowed up, and your pretty cousin promised to wait."

"But we don't know what might happen," said Archie. "Wait here if you are tired, and I will go ahead alone. Is it far from here?"

"No, only just this side of those cliffs. Don't be in such a hurry, and I will go with you in a minute."

Crack!

Crack!

Crack!

"She is attacked!"

"Run ahead, Arch. By jinks, I'm with you now."

"The savages have not gone away, and she is in danger."

"I'll give 'em a warnin', see if I don't."

"You can run, can't you, Phil?"

"You bet, when I think of the danger of that lovely girl."

They had just reached the cliffs, when a crowd of dusky savages came bounding around a corner of the rocks.

Phil drew his pistol and blazed away, keeling two of the wretches over in a couple of seconds, and utterly frightening the wits out of the others.

They regarded the lad with looks of horror, and dashed away in all directions, some plunging into the sea, some running full tilt against the cliffs, and many falling flat upon their faces in the most abject terror.

Crack!

It was Phil's weapon which spoke, and another of the horrible creatures bit the dust.

Crack!

Was this the echo of Phil's shot, or was it a sign that the brave girl was still alive?

Crack!

Again it sounded, and Phil, answering it with a shot from his own weapon, and sending another of the howling imps upon his face, dashed around the cliffs.

Crack!

Crack!

The wild beasts in human guise were running like sheep, and there was not one anywhere near the brave girl, who nevertheless continued to fire at them in order to hasten their flight.

They took their canoes, those who were not too frightened to move, and soon the waves were dotted with the swiftly moving craft, but both Phil and Pearl blazed away until all their ammunition at hand was used up.

Other shots were heard from the direction of the interior, and presently a tall, full-bearded man appeared with a rifle in his hand.

"You have returned at last!" cried Pearl. "I gave those horrid wretches a fine fright, and I don't believe they will come here again. They must never have heard the sound of firearms, and but for that I should have been killed, for there was a terrible lot of them."

"You're a brave girl; but do you know who this is?" said Phil, bringing Archie forward.

She gazed upon the boy's wonderfully handsome face in silence, and then said, blushing like a rose:

"You have spoken truly, and this is my cousin, but he is better than I had ever dared to dream. This is indeed happiness."

"Pearl, my cousin," said Archie, with strange emotion, folding the lovely girl in his arms, "this is more than I ever dared hope for. It is the hand of Providence that has brought us together after all these years of separation."

At this moment the tall, full-bearded man approached, and taking Phil's hand, said in a voice choked with feeling:

"Bless you, my lad. Yours is the first honest face, other than this dear girl's, that I have seen for years. I am Captain Ingraham, late of the ship Neptune. I heard the shots, but I see that you were in time to be of assistance. This is the first time we have seen any savages on our island."

"Are there any others near at hand?"

"No, but these villains sometimes travel a long distance in their canoes. I saw them yesterday, but said nothing to Pearl, not wishing to alarm her unnecessarily, and thinking that perhaps they might go away without discovering us."

"You will perhaps not be prepared for the disclosure I shall make," said Phil, "but these two young spoons who seem to be enjoying each other's company so much are cousins. My friend is Mr. Archibald Mellen, of New York, heir to a fortune which his uncle has been trying to chisel him out of. The Pearl is the other heir, and if those two marry, which is very likely, Mr. Husted will be left out in the cold."

"This is marvelous," said the captain. "Yes, I can see a resemblance, and there can be no doubt that the two are indeed cousins."

"Arch, suppose you look around and speak to some one," cried Phil, with a laugh; and the boy, so strangely united to his cousin long supposed dead, greeted Ingraham most cordially, the latter proposing that since the enemy appeared to have entirely departed, they might as well go up to the house.

On their way thither, Phil related briefly how they came to be upon the island, and the captain was so astonished at the strange recital that he listened in silence, never uttering a word until they reached the house. Pearl and Archie lingered behind as lovers still.

CHAPTER XII.

HOPES AND FEARS, HAPPINESS AND SORROW.

The boys were very much delighted with the name of Pearl, and were very much astonished at the neatness of everything about the place.

The clothing saved from the wreck had long since been worn out, of course, and garments made from goat-skins took their place, the young heroine of the island being a skilful needle woman, and providing all the clothing needed for herself and companion.

The goats were generally killed with arrows made by the captain, the powder and ball being saved for an emergency, it not being necessary to use much of it.

One very elegant costume worn by Pearl was made of the feathers of gay plumaged birds, and was a wonderful piece of workmanship, making its wearer look like some tame bird that had assumed for the nonce a semi-human appearance.

No farm in the rural districts of their own country could have been better kept than was the little clearing owned by the two castaways, and Archie was constantly seeing something new to surprise and delight him.

Upon the dinner-table were all the nice vegetables that he had been used to at home, bread-fruit, fried plantains, wine made from bananas, jelly from various delicate fruits, and many other things which could tempt the palate of the most fastidious epicure that ever lived.

The chickens thrived finely, and a fat fowl was roasted for dinner, the dressing being composed of some spicy nuts, which added a delicate flavor, besides which there were for side dishes an omelette made from new-laid eggs, a salad made of crisp lettuce, cold chicken and chopped onions, and a pancake filled with jelly, which made Phil laugh for very joy.

"Why, bless your hearts," he said, "this knocks cabin fare on a ship sky-high. They can't begin to live so well, even in some of your high-toned houses at home. By George, I believe I could live here always."

"We will leave you here when we depart," said Archie, "No, you don't, for it's no fun to live here all alone. I declare, though, I never supposed that a body could possibly get on as well as you have."

"We were particularly fortunate in many respects," said Ingraham, "for there are plenty poor fellows who are cast upon barren islands where food is scarce and there is no shelter but clefts in the rocks."

The evening was spent in relating the incidents in the lives of the four companions, Ingraham being overjoyed at the providential meeting of the cousins after such a long separation.

"Pearl has always maintained that you were alive," he said to Archie, "and both her father and myself fostered that belief, as it seemed to afford her so much gratification, and could certainly do her no harm. It only remains for us now to be taken from this island to make our happiness complete. Poor Maitland! he prayed daily for this, but at last wore his heart out with his fond longings."

As Pearl had prophesied, the terrible savages did not return, having probably been so dreadfully frightened by the loud noises of the strange weapons used by these unknown people that they imagined the islands to be under the especial protection of some great spirit more powerful than any that they worshiped, and therefore never dared go near them again.

Whatever the reason was, the islanders were troubled by no more visitations from their warlike neighbors, and their life was as peaceful and tranquil as it had been ever since their first coming.

The other islands of the group were visited, and Archie saw new instances of how Ingraham had improved his time during his stay.

A turtle pond had been constructed, and fresh turtles could be procured at any time, another stocked with fine fish was situated not far away, upon one of the islands where there was a lagoon a salt pan had been constructed, which furnished the table with any quantity of this most indispensable condiment.

Then, too, Ingraham made all his candles, a berry being found upon the islands which made an excellent tallow when boiled down, the wicks being manufactured from the fiber of another plant which grew in great abundance, the candles themselves being molded in a gun-barrel, and then cut into convenient lengths.

Mats, hangings, carpets, shoes, hats, and even clothing, were made from the husk of coconuts, the shells being used for dishes, drinking cups, candlesticks, lamps and flower-pots, Pearl having a beautiful little hanging garden in her room and another in the porch of the house.

It seemed to be entirely prearranged that Pearl and Archie should fall in love, which they did at once, to their own and the others' complete satisfaction, though Phil was by no means neglected, and he often said, laughingly, that if he hadn't been so honest he might easily have cut Archie out, as he had been the first to find Pearl.

Pearl's education had not been neglected, and she knew as much of the theory of navigation as any one, all that she lacked being practice, besides knowing all that Ingraham knew, and much more in some directions.

The time passed rapidly after the boys came, but though they looked daily for a vessel, and always had a signal flying by day, and a light hoisted at night, they saw not the faintest glimpse of a sail, heard nothing but the sighing of the wind, the roar of the surf, and the boom of the thunder.

That Westbrook would return was entirely out of the question, but Phil maintained stoutly that Norton would certainly come after him, or at least acquaint his father with his whereabouts, in which case the latter would certainly send a ship to the rescue of his son.

A year passed away and no vessel had been sighted, no tidings received from the great world; no message, however slight, wafted to them, and as the months rolled on, poor Phil had hard work to retain his buoyant spirits.

He invented all sorts of mechanical contrivances, carved innumerable boxes, and inlaid them with every wood he could find, in all sorts of patterns, made chessmen, draughts, dice, back-gammon boards, got up a pack of cards from thin slips of white wood, with red cedar and ebony inlaid for the spots, painting the court cards with pigments found on the island, and in many other ways taxed his ingenuity to the utmost so as to forget his sorrow.

He had not the same things to keep his mind at rest as did Pearl and Archie, or even the captain, and it was therefore much more difficult for him to still the longings of his aching heart, though he tried manfully and bravely not to exert any depressing influence upon the others.

But Archie noticed his friend's occasional melancholy looks, and he tried in every possible way to cheer him up and make him conquer his feelings and submit to the inevitable.

"Poor fellow," he would say to himself, as Phil would run off to hide his tears after straining his eyes by looking out to sea, "he does not think it is as jolly here as he once did. If he were left alone he would die of grief."

The gray hairs were even now beginning to steal among Phil's curly locks, and his face wore a more serious look than it had ever done, though in his conversation he was as merry as ever, and often kept them laughing the whole evening while he himself was ready to cry out at any minute.

The months rolled on, the seasons came and went, and nearly two years had elapsed since their abandonment by the Billow, when one day Phil, seated upon the cliffs whittling a whistle in the end of a long-twig, and softly humming to himself, raised those large eyes of his, so pitiful in their expression, and looked out to sea.

His heart seemed to jump into his mouth, and springing to his feet he fairly flew down the steep path, dashed across the beach, and through the little grove to the house where he fell upon the floor crying in a loud voice:

"I have seen a sail! We are going home at last."

CHAPTER XIII.

NORTON REACHES THE ISLAND.

It was nearly a week after Norton had decided to take possession of the ship before he made any demonstration, but he was by no means idle all that time.

He worked out his own reckonings, and found that the vessel was nearer the islands than the captain supposed, and as long as there was any chance of making them he determined to remain quiet.

He had won the mate and all but four or five men over to his side, however, though the men understood that nothing was to be done unless the captain refused, in case of danger, to run to the nearest port.

At last the weather became very tempestuous, and it was easily seen that the schooner could not stand the strain which would more than likely be put upon her.

The captain lost his head, and gave contradictory orders, and had not Norton given the proper ones the catastrophe would have come sooner than it did.

"What do you mean by giving orders!" demanded the captain, the men having already started to obey them. "Stop where you are," he continued, addressing the sailors.

"Do as I tell you," cried Norton, "or we are lost."

The men obeyed, and the captain, angrier than ever, strode forward and cried in a rage:

"Do you think I am not able to command my own ship, you lubber?"

"I don't know how you might make out on a ship, but you certainly don't know how to look after this schooner."

"This is mutiny, sir."

"No, it is not, it is common sense. Lay out there and take in the flying-jib, put another reef in your mainsail, and hoist a storm trysail on the fore."

"Haven't got any, sir," said the mate.

"The deuce you haven't. Then take a reef and draw your points up snug."

"Half the points are gone, sir."

"Then stop her up as well as you can, and work lively. Ease up your wheel a bit, my man. Lively now, bullies. Don't you see that squall coming? There'll be the mischief to pay in less than five minutes."

"What do you mean by changing the course of the vessel?" demanded the captain, white with rage.

"Look here, sir," said Norton, coming up to the captain, and leading him aft in spite of himself. "You and I and all of us have been betrayed by a couple of scoundrels, Westbrook and Hodge; do you know them?"

"They hired me to go as master of this ship—schooner, I mean."

"And the rest of the crew, too, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"You had nothing to do with putting in the cargo?"

"No, I only know that it's valuable, and that we are bound for Valparaiso."

"Which we will never reach. It is a great mercy that we ever reached the Pacific at all. It was all we could do to weather Cape Horn. They never intended to have us reach

port. We are far out of our course now, but we are bearing for some islands which I know, and where we can make a good harbor."

"I must go to Valparaiso."

"You don't know how to do it. If you started from Spain for the Cape of Good Hope you'd strike New York that's all you know about laying a course."

"You are insolent, sir."

"Nothing of the sort. You are no navigator and you know it. You understand a little about it, to be sure, and just little enough to put us all in danger of our lives. I can save the vessel, perhaps, but you must leave all to me."

"Where do you intend going?"

"To the islands I speak of."

"And remain there all our lives? Sooner than do that I would take the risk of shipwreck."

"You refuse?"

"Yes."

"Then I shall take charge myself. Stand by, my men! Follow me!"

Before the mutineers could rush to their leader's aid the storm broke with full fury upon the doomed vessel, and Norton, springing into the main rigging, shouted in a voice of thunder:

"Save the vessel, my men, before you do anything else."

"Aye, aye!" shouted all hands.

"Take in all sail. Keep your wheel steady, amidships. Stand by! Look out for that sea!"

The caution came too late for some of the poor fellows, and when the wall of water struck the vessel they were washed over into the ocean, from which there was no hope of saving them.

Norton did his best to save the vessel, but she was too old and leaky, and her utter demolition was but a question of time.

The squall ceased in less than fifteen minutes, but it left the schooner a wreck, and already sinking.

Then it was seen that the captain, mate, and half a dozen men had been lost outright, and one or two others had been badly hurt by the falling masts.

Dismasted, her rudder-post carried away, the bowsprit broken off short, the boats stove, the hold half full of water, and the hull still leaking badly, the vessel was indeed in a pitiable state, it being a question of a few moments only before she would sink.

"Stand by with your axes!" yelled Norton. "Cut away the poop and rail. Lash those broken spars together. Quick's your play now if you want to escape."

The instinct of self-preservation inspired the men to heroic efforts, Norton working harder than any two of

them, so that in an incredibly short space of time a rude raft was hastily constructed, upon which the men placed themselves and pushed off.

They were supplied with a sail, a makeshift mast, half a dozen oars, provisions and water for three or four days, a chest, compass and quadrant.

"Push off lively!" roared Norton. "Push off or we will be swamped!"

They had hardly got a cable's length from the schooner when she suddenly rose up in the air upon the crest of a huge wave, and then plunged head first into the seething waters.

The waves rolled over the spot, a few bubbles arose to the surface, and then all trace of the doomed vessel disappeared, and the desperate mariners were alone upon the wide ocean.

For days and days they floated on, Norton keeping steadily to his course, but one by one the men died of exhaustion or exposure, until at last he alone of all the crew was left to tell the story of the shipwreck.

Without food or water, crazed with hunger and thirst, worn and weary from hard work, he had still one firm purpose in his mind, that of reaching the island and telling the story of his wrongs.

But for this he would have died long before he sighted the island, but the hope of life is strong in the human breast, and it was this and this only that sustained him in his terrible situation.

His sail was spread, he saw the islands, saw a lookout on the cliff, then, as he came nearer, saw men hurry down the beach, saw a little raft push out, was taken aboard, and then fainted, reviving to find himself in a neat room with Pearl and Archie bending pityingly over him.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

In a small, dingy-looking office upon the third floor of a dilapidated building on South street, in the city of New York, sat two men looking over a sheet of paper upon which was a number of figures.

"We made pretty well out of that last spec," said one of the men, with a laugh.

"Yes, if the underwriters will pay up."

"There ain't no doubt of that."

"I ain't so sure about that, cap'n; somebody's been startin' some nasty stories about us, and when I went down there this mornin', they said there was a few legal formalities to be gone through with fust."

"That be blowed, Hodge. They allus say that."

"But they don't allus look like they did to-day, nor do they allus hind about irregularities, unseaworthy vessels, wuthless cargoes, incompetent men and sich like."

"The deuce! Did they say that?"

"You're right, and I'm glad you've come in, 'cause I wanted to talk to yer about this very thing. I think that the best thing we can do is to skip."

"So do I: Let's get. Stick a notice on the door sayin' we're out o' town for three or four days, and by that time we'll be out o' the way."

As they arose to go, the door opened, and a man whom they both knew entered and stood facing them accusingly. The man was John Norton, former second mate of the *Billow*.

"So you are going to skip, are you?" he said with a laugh. "You're just a little too late!"

Then he threw open the door, and two officers entered.

"Arrest these men," he cried, "for conspiracy against the lives and property of their fellow men."

The officers showed a warrant which set forth that the accused were charged with insuring worthless vessels at a fictitious value; of conspiring to take the life of one Archibald Mellen, and other offenses of a like grave character.

The two villains turned pale, and tried to escape, but the officers soon overpowered them and marched them off to the nearest police station.

A little later in the day, Mr. Preston, the rich merchant, was seated in his private office, when his confidential clerk opened the door a few inches, stuck his head in, and said mysteriously:

"A lad wishes to see you, sir."

"Say I am busy. Let him wait."

"He seems to be in a hurry, sir."

"Can't help it. I am very busy."

"He can tell you something about Phil, if I mistake not, sir."

The man was all attention in an instant.

"Is Phil alive?" he cried.

"I think very likely, sir, or so I gather from the boy's—"

"Show him in!"

The door was thrown open, and a bronzed, handsome-looking boy rushed in, and threw himself impetuously at the merchant's feet.

"My father!"

"Phil! my boy—my boy! Thank Heaven for this."

Then the clerk discreetly retired, and the father and son, reunited after so long a time, and when Mr. Preston had given up all hope, fell into each other's arms, not a word being spoken for several minutes.

Then Phil told the whole story of the villainy of the

two men who had just been arrested, of his life on the island, of his finding Captain Ingraham and the lost heiress, Archie's cousin, of Norton's coming, and finally of their being rescued by a passing vessel and of their coming home.

"It sounds like a romance, Phil," said Mr. Preston, stroking the boy's curly head, in which the gray was sadly mixed, giving the lad a prematurely old look; "but I am more thankful than I can express at your safe arrival. What shall we do with these villains, my poor old fellow?"

"They are in prison, father, and will be dealt with according to their deserts. They have committed no crime against me, and I can bear them no resentment since they have been the means of restoring Archie to his rights."

Mr. Husted sat in his library that night in the same place where he had paid over the blood-money to the two conspirators, sadly troubled in his mind.

He was reading the evening paper, and his eye had chanced to fall upon a paragraph which related the wonderful experiences of a boy and girl, heirs to an immense fortune, who had just arrived in port after a long absence, and who had been most strangely reunited.

No names were given, but the man knew too well that this was neither a newspaper romance nor a striking coincidence, and that his nephew and niece had returned to claim the inheritance from which he would have deprived them.

"I must flee!" he said; "for an exposure would ruin me. Yes, there is nothing for it. Those villains have been arrested; they will tell the whole story, and I shall be shown to the whole world. Oh, gold, gold, what crimes have I committed to obtain you, and now you are powerless to save my name from disgrace."

He arose and went to his safe, opened it, and was in the act of taking out a package, when the bell rang sharply, causing him to start with fear.

He heard the door open, heard voices, and then footsteps, staggered to his feet, clasped his throbbing head in his hands, and with an agonized shriek fell to the floor.

He struck his temples against the sharp corner of the safe.

Then he fell flat upon the heavy carpet, choked and struggled violently for an instant, and then lay rigid and dead.

"Death from heart disease," was the verdict, but that was not the real cause.

His guilty conscience had at last broken its silence, and had conquered him, snapped his heartstrings in twain, and sent him, with all his sins unrepented, to his Maker.

He had barely ceased to struggle when three persons hastily entered the room and gazed in horror upon the ghastly scene before them.

There was a tall, well-built, handsome old man, with white hair and beard, a young gentleman of nineteen or twenty, bronzed and bearded, and a young girl of most exquisite beauty, dressed with extreme good taste, her golden hair flowing in a shiny torrent over her well-rounded shoulders.

The persons were Captain Ingraham, Archie Mellen, and Pearl Maitland.

"We are too late!" said the old captain, slowly. "He is dead. His conscience has done the work better than we could have done."

Archie Mellen has been for many years the captain and owner of as fine a ship as ever floated, and she is called the Pearl of the Pacific, her figurehead being an exact representation of the captain's wife as she appeared when he first saw her.

John Norton is his first officer, and has never touched a drop of liquor since his return from the island in the Pacific, and strange to say, he is as much opposed to rats as Phil Preston himself in the days gone by.

Westbrook and Hodge are both dead, having died in prison after making all the reparation they could for their many crimes, and their very existence is now forgotten by all but a few.

Archie and his cousin share the fortune which was restored to them, and though they have been married many years and have a large family of children, they are as much in love with each other as ever, and every time that Archie comes home there is a royal rejoicing, and Phil Preston, as hearty an old bachelor as ever lived, and as prosperous a man as one wants to see, occupies the post of honor next to Pearl, whom he regards with the utmost devotion.

"As there are not two such Pearls in the whole world," he says, "I shall remain single unless Archie dies, which is not likely. At any rate, I have one consolation, she took me for him at first, and I might have had her if I hadn't thought so much of him."

And so he lives on, happy in the love of his friends, prosperous in his business, contented with his lot, and looking back only with pleasant feelings to the times when he lived on the lonely island in mid-ocean and first became acquainted with the beautiful Pearl of the Pacific.

Next week's issue will contain "BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE." A Story of the Mexican War.

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A MASKED MYSTERY

AN UP-TO-DATE SERIAL STORY

By J. T. BROUGHAM

(CHAPTER XI.—Continued)

The weapon was knocked aside by the old negress, who had crept up behind the detective, and the bullet was imbedded in the wall.

Hawkins remained uninjured.

A laugh pealed from his lips, and he cried to the negress:

"Throw that vitriol in his face and blind him, Dinah!"

Tom turned around and saw the old hag.

She held a cup full of liquid in her hands, and was raising it to fling the contents over the detective, when Tom wheeled around and gave the cup a kick.

The liquid flew all over the old woman.

She uttered a wild scream of agony and fell upon the floor, where she writhed like a snake.

The oil of vitriol was eating into her flesh.

Her eyes were both destroyed.

Great yellow streaks seaming the skin on her hands and face showed where the liquid was burning her.

The flesh was cooked and browned worse than if hot coals had fallen upon it, and the old hag's howls and struggles raised a terrible din.

She was suffering the torments of purgatory.

Tom felt sorry for her suffering.

Yet she had designed the dreadful liquid for him.

Had she succeeded, an appalling fate might have been his, for the drug which the negress had very likely taken from the doctor's store, would have eaten into him as it did into the old woman.

While Tom stood staring at the old woman in the most intense horror, Jim Hawkins, callous of heart to the poor old wretch's sufferings, and thinking only of his own desperate situation, stole over to the open window.

The detective's back was turned toward him.

He climbed out and dropped to the ground below.

Then he jumped into the doctor's buggy and drove rapidly away through the village.

"This is your fault, Jim Hawkins," said Tom.

Then he turned around—started—and uttered an invective.

The bird had flown!

It had been done in a twinkling, and as the open window showed Tom that it was the only avenue by which Jim Hawkins could get away, he cursed his folly for not remaining upon his guard to prevent his escape.

He took his things from the center table.

Then he set about to relieve the suffering of the negress.

Much as he wanted Hawkins, his humane heart bled with sympathy for the luckless black woman, and he thought:

"I can get on his trail and track him down later."

CHAPTER XII.

THE MYSTERIOUS PAPER.

It was a difficult matter for Tom Wonder to allay the pain in which the old negress was suffering, but he applied all such lotions as he deemed expedient.

In the meantime she raved and cursed at him in a dreadful manner for bringing the misfortune on her, and made every effort to injure him.

Once she caught his hand between her gums and bit him so hard that if she had teeth he would have probably lost half of his hand.

Next she arose in a frenzy, and seizing a stool she hurled it at the detective, knocking him down.

"You are a vixen!" he exclaimed angrily, as he arose.

"And you are to blame for this!" she raved furiously.

"Why don't you behave yourself? I want to ease your pain?"

"Oh, I am going to die from this!" she shrieked.

"Nonsense! It is your own fault."

"It isn't!"

"You would have flung that stuff on me!"

"So I would."

"And I simply tried to knock it out of your hands."

"But just see what you have done—ruined me."

"It was purely an accident."

"Oh—this pain—it is horrible."

"Poor wretch."

"Shut up! I don't want your pity."

"How cross you are."

"Heaven help me! Saints help me!"

"Now keep still. I'll lift you up on the lounge."

"No! No! No! Don't you dare to lay a hand on me."

"I will. I can't leave you here on the floor."

"I won't go! Don't touch me, I say. Oh—what misery!"

"Now you keep still or I'll make you!"

And so saying Tom picked her up in his arms in spite of her struggles and laid her on the lounge.

There she writhed and groaned, and yelled for all the saints in the calendar to help her.

These violent paroxysms soon ended.

She fainted.

"It is best so," said Tom, looking at her.

Then an idea occurred to him.

"I'll search this house from attic to cellar," he muttered, grimly. "Who knows but what I may find something of importance to myself?"

Leaving the negress where she was lying, he started off, and began his investigations with a will down-stairs.

There was a medicine rack on the wall, and he opened it, and found several vials exactly like the one which Dr. Midnight had given to Jim Hawkins filled with the poison like that which killed Mr. Ruddyglow.

They were empty.

But he soon discovered another bottle containing a mixture of the drugs which had killed the old banker.

The vials were peculiar in shape.

They were of foreign make, and had no name or stamp

on them, but were shaped like pears, and had glass corks with oddly turned tops.

"Strange!" he muttered. "Could Hawkins, intimate as he was with Harvey Midnight, have procured that vial and the deadly drug here? It seems so. At any rate, I will take possession of these things for future use. There was something peculiar in the doctor's confession. Hawkins denied the accusations so emphatically and with such a tone of honest sincerity that I can hardly doubt him. In that case the doctor may know a good deal more about that crime than he will confess."

He finished his search of the room, and after he had scoured all the rest of the lower part of the house he went up-stairs to the bed-room floor again, and entered the physician's sleeping apartment.

It did not take him long to make a close inspection of everything, and he came across a suit of clothes that certainly were not made for the doctor.

It was a very stylish suit.

"Why, I have seen these things before," the detective muttered. "But where? Let me see—ah! I have it! They belong to Jim Hawkins! But why are they here?"

But one draw in the bureau remained to be examined, and when he pulled it open, he was amazed to find it containing an assortment of wigs, beards, false whiskers and mustaches, paints, powders, and a general assortment of things such as actors use to make themselves up for the stage.

"Could he have been an actor?" thought Tom in surprise. "It looks so. Then again these things could have been used as disguises for illegal purposes. Anyway I will take possession of them and the suit of clothes."

He was as good as his word.

Just then he heard a terrible noise in the next room, in which laid the groaning negress.

The detective rushed in to see what the matter was.

The old woman was no longer on the lounge but had crept over to the spot near the bureau and there had lifted up a small section board in the floor, over which a piece of carpet was tacked.

A tin box stood in the aperture.

The negress had opened it.

She withdrew a folded paper, and a low, exultant exclamation broke from her thick lips.

"Safe!" she gabbled. "I've got it. The man is a detective. He is searching the house. He might find this. Then my dear master's secret would be exposed. But I am sharp and shrewd. I will save him with my last atom of strength."

"Here! Give me that!" shouted Tom.

He ran toward her and she uttered a piercing cry, started upon her feet and recoiled.

"Never!" was her fierce reply.

"Hand it over, or it will be the worse for you."

"I would die first!" was the determined reply.

"Fool! Must I resort to force?"

"There is no need. Be a man!"

"A man?"

"No man—no real man would attack a poor, miserable, suffering old wretch like I am."

"But I must have that paper."

"And I won't give it up for love or money."

"Then you must suffer the consequence."

"Back! Back! Stand back, you coward!"

Tom was wild, for he saw that the paper must be something of the most vital importance, which the old beldame was afraid would betray her master for some iniquity of his.

He must get it at any hazard.

He ran toward the old woman, but in spite of the misery she was enduring, she turned and ran out into the hall.

Then she dashed into the doctor's room and slammed the door shut after her.

When Tom reached it he found it locked.

"What a determined old hag!" he muttered.

He was not going to be balked though, and rushing at the door, he burst it open as he had done the other one that shielded Jim Hawkins.

The old woman had fallen on her knees in the center of the floor, and clutching her face with both hands, she seemed to be choking to death.

The detective was amazed.

Rushing up to her, he violently shook her.

"What ails you?" he exclaimed.

The old woman shook her head.

She was evidently strangling.

"Speak!" roared Tom. "What have you been doing?"

Still no reply from the old woman, and she fell over upon the floor, her face contorted, her sightless eyes bulging out, and her figure convulsively twitching.

Tom bent over her.

And keenly eyed her.

She seemed to swallow something, and half arising on her elbows, she fixed a horrible glare upon him.

"I am dying!" she gasped.

"Dying? Heaven! what have you done?"

"Baffled you—saved my imprisoned master!"

"The paper?"

"I have swallowed it!"

"Great guns!" gasped Tom aghast.

A convulsive tremor shook the old woman's figure, and she uttered a gasping cry and fell prostrate.

One glance was enough for Tom.

She was dead!

CHAPTER XIII.

THEORIZING ON CLEWS.

THE detective was amazed at the action of the old woman, and stood staring at her corpse in silence for a few moments, almost speechless.

"Dead!" he muttered at last. "The effort she made has killed her. But what secret is this she was so desperate about that she sacrificed her life to keep it! She has swallowed the paper, and it is now inside of her—safe, as she thinks. But let me see."

He bent over the old woman.

Her under jaw had fallen and he opened her lips and carefully peered into her mouth.

"She has not got a tooth left," he muttered, "so the paper was not masticated. In that event she must have swallowed it whole or torn it to do so. At any rate the remains of the paper can easily be removed from her stomach, and I am certain of deciphering what the writing was upon it. I'll tell the coroner to get it when the post mortem examination is made of the body."

He felt the body lying where it was upon the floor, and making a parcel of the clothing, wigs, bottles and poison he left the house.

There was nothing else to be found there of any use to him, and he deemed it best to get on the trail of Jim Hawkins as rapidly as possible in order to prevent the rascal covering up his tracks.

"He has taken the carriage," he muttered. "That will make it easier for me to track him. Yet he is the slipperiest crook

I ever heard of, and is noted for the depth of the tricks he resorts to."

By dint of persistent inquiries he soon learned in which direction Hawkins had gone, and followed him to the Riverdale depot of the railroad.

He had stabled the horse and buggy there, and then had purchased a ticket for New York on the train.

It was only thirteen miles to the city, and the train had been gone five minutes, so he had a good start of Tom.

"I can count upon his hiding in New York, at any rate, since he has gone there," the detective thought, "so I will take the next train and run my chances of discovering him in some of his usual haunts. In the meantime, I'll go to the police headquarters and have a conversation with the inspector and coroner of New York. Harvey Midnight must be held without bail until I lay hands on Jim Hawkins. Then it will not be a very difficult matter to discover who killed Roderick Ruddy glow. It certainly must lie between those two men. But which of them? Time alone will tell the story."

Tom boarded the next train and went to the city.

He had reduced his plan of action for the future to tracking but one man, and he was supposed to be the most guilty one of the two who were under suspicion.

When he reached the city, he headed for the coroner's office in Park Row, and told him all that was necessary to secure the paper which the old negress had devoured.

Then he went up to Mulberry street and found the chief in his office, unoccupied with work.

"Well, Tom, what is the news?" he asked.

"I have had a little adventure," the detective replied.

Then he explained all that happened to him, and showed the inspector what he discovered.

The chief looked at the contents of his bundle very carefully, and compared the vial and the liquid with that which Tom had taken from Hawkins on the night Mr. Ruddy glow died.

"The same kind of bottle and drug," he commented.

"A chemist could analyze the poison and find out if the proportion of ingredients is exactly the same," said Tom; "and that would be pretty conclusive proof that the vial of poison I took from Hawkins came from Midnight's house."

"That is so."

"What do you make of those wigs?"

"Midnight never was an actor, was he?"

"Not that I am aware of."

"Then he used them as disguises for another purpose."

"That seems very likely, sir."

"Now what great purpose had he in view?"

"To marry Maud Postboy."

"But he had a living wife, Tom."

"True—still, that was his game."

"Granted. Now what can we deduct from that circumstance alone? Let me see. He met the girl on the night Ruddy glow died, you say? And at the village?"

"Yes, she was embarrassed over it, too."

"Now why did he have this suit of Jim Hawkins?"

"Another mystery to me, sir."

"There is a reason for everything, Tom."

"Exactly so."

"One more question."

"I am listening, sir."

"A servant saw Hawkins in the hall and in his uncle's room?"

"That is what Midnight accused him of."

"Did the girl describe Hawkins' appearance?"

"Yes, at the time of the trial."

"And I've got a copy of the court stenographer's report."

"What conclusion have you arrived at, chief?"

"Oh, I am forming a theory by putting this and that together."

He took some papers from a pigeon hole in his desk and selecting one, he drew it out and read it through.

"Well?" said Tom.

"I've got it. Read this description of the suit the girl saw on Jim Hawkins on both occasions when she saw him."

"Black pants, fawn-colored coat and vest, and derby hat," Tom read aloud, then he added in surprise, "and this description tallies exactly with the suit I just brought here."

"Yes—of course. Now look at this separate parcel of false hair among the wigs—what are they?"

"A black wig, black mustache, and black eyebrows."

"The same as Jim Hawkins'."

"Pretty near."

"But if a man like Midnight put them on with this suit, and was seen in a dim light, he could very easily be mistaken for Hawkins, couldn't he, if the servant was only casually familiar with his figure?"

"By jingo! You mean—"

"I only am presuming, Tom, that since these things are found in Midnight's possession, and Hawkins has impressed you with the belief in his innocence, nothing is likelier than that Midnight may have impersonated Hawkins and poisoned the old man himself. Remember he was intimate with Hawkins, and called at the manor with him frequently—remember that he must have furnished Jim with that vial and poison—remember that he was anxious to marry Maud Postboy and was on a fair road to do it, until the dying man put a stop to it. In a word, my dear Tom, as Midnight expected to marry the girl and did not know beforehand that her union with him would annul the will in her favor, he might have had all his plans in readiness to wed her, and hasten her possession of the fortune by killing her uncle. It is very simple. He must have known from Jim that the old man was down on Hawkins and had disinherited him. So he thought perhaps that throughout the whole game he would have plain, easy sailing."

"I hope my new found clew may prove your theory to be the right one," said Tom.

"It remains for you to test it by arresting that bird of prey you are tracking. There is no other way. Recollect the dates on which the girl said she saw him. Then ascertain from Jim if he was in his uncle's room and in the hall on those dates. If he can prove that he was not then you can be sure that somebody else was impersonating him in order to deceive any chance observer, and at the same time lead to the impression that Hawkins was guilty. That somebody, according to my idea of these clothes, false hair, cosmetics, wigs and poison, could be no one else than the doctor himself."

"Well, Hawkins is in the city now, and if you will try to work upon Harvey Midnight while I am tracking the bird of prey, we may solve this masked mystery, sir."

"I shall not remain idle long, Tom."

"Moreover," added the detective, "when the coroner produces the papers for me which the doctor's old housekeeper swallowed to keep his secret we may know a great deal more. However, I will leave these things with you now, and commence operations at once to collar Hawkins. That is the only way to discover the truth of the whole matter. And now good-afternoon," and the detective went out.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE GAMBLING DEN.

On the following night Tom Wonder left a hotel at which he had been stopping on Broadway and walked through Twenty-ninth street into Sixth avenue.

Upon reaching the corner he came to a pause, and glancing keenly around, he leaned against a lamp-post.

There was a liquor saloon on the corner, at the side door of which he occasionally glanced much as if he expected to see somebody emerge.

"The spotter told me," muttered Tom, "that Jim Hawkins was talking to a noted crook and that they were to meet here to-night to play a game of poker. I won't go up-stairs until I see the spotter."

Tom had a long wait, for fully an hour passed by before the side door opened, and the man came out for whom he was looking.

The moment he beheld the detective he glided up to him, tapped Tom on the arm, and said in low tones:

"He is up-stairs now playing a big game."

"How do you know?" asked the detective.

"I've been hidden in the hall-room since twilight, and heard him come in little over an hour ago or about eight o'clock. The crook was with him. I did not want to leave my post until I was sure I could do so without being seen."

"Who is in the room with them?"

"Nobody. They are in the boss's office in back of the card-room."

"Yes. Look out for the spotter who is guarding the door of the front room where the regular game is played. The gambling-room is full, and there is not an opening at any of the three poker tables. If the spotter sees you he may warn Hawkins."

"I will try to avoid him for he knows me."

"Can I do anything else for you, Tom?"

"No. Go back to headquarters—the chief wants you."

"All right. Look out, though."

"Don't worry about me."

The detective parted with the spotter, and opening the side door of the saloon, he passed into a dark hall.

The moment he was inside, he drew a pair of felt pads from his pocket, and put them on the soles of his shoes.

He could now move about without making the least noise, and crept toward the stairs at one side of the hall.

Ascending them to the next floor, he passed through a dark hall, and went up another flight.

The utmost caution was now necessary.

A false step might betray him.

When half way up the next flight, he was brought to a sudden pause by hearing a door open.

For an instant a bright glare of light shot out into the open doorway of the front room, and the shadow of a man was reflected on the staircase wall over Tom's head.

It remained there but a moment.

There came the sound of clicking ivory chips, the low hum of voices, and the clinking of glasses.

"It is the door of the poker-room which was just opened," the detective thought, "and that shadow is from the spotter's body. I hope he won't look down over the balustrade, or he may see me."

Tom crouched close to the stair carpet, and listened.

A moment of anxiety passed by.

Then the door closed with a bang.

The light vanished.

"He has gone in!" muttered the officer.

It was a matter of intense relief to him, for if the spotter had seen him, Hawkins would have been warned of his peril and might make his escape.

Assured that the coast was clear, the detective hastened to walk to the door of a hall room.

It was evidently the room in which the spotter had been concealed, and the door stood slightly ajar.

Tom softly pushed it open, passed in, closed the door gently, locked it, and ignited a match.

When the flame arose, he saw that the room was empty, and had one window, overlooking the back of the house, a torn shade covering the dirty panes of glass.

At one side was a door communicating with the rear apartment in which the spotter said Jim Hawkins and the crook were playing cards.

In fact, a ray of light was darting through a keyhole from the adjoining room, and the detective heard the subdued voices of two people in conversation in the back room.

He listened a moment.

Then he recognized the tones.

"One is Jim Hawkins, sure enough, and the other——"

He could not distinguish for a moment, and softly approaching the door he knelt down beside it, saw that it was locked on the side he was on, and putting the match out he peered through the keyhole.

He had a circumscribed view of the other room.

It contained a desk, a few chairs, carpet, pictures and an electrical annunciator fastened on one of the window frames.

To all appearances it was an office.

In the middle of the room stood a circular table covered with green baize, and having a "kitty-hole" in the center, a gas fixture over it shedding light down on two men who sat at the table playing cards.

One was Hawkins, as he already knew, and the moment his glance fell on the other, he muttered:

"Why, he is Red Leary?"

The companion of the fastidious Hawkins was a very coarse-looking, heavy featured, red-headed man, who had celebrated himself as a bank burglar.

He was attired in coarse garments, and spoke in a very gruff tone of voice to the other.

They were speaking as Tom peered in, and the detective heard Hawkins say in bandering tones:

"You are in hard luck to-night, Leary—see the point?"

"I'll ha' ter give up soon," growled the other.

"Oh, don't be a clam!"

"But I'm prutty near busted. Never see sich luck!"

"This pot is mine, too—see, I've got two pair."

"That beats my one pair."

"That makes just a cool thousand I've won from you."

"You're in luck."

"You bet. Try another hand?"

"I don't keer. I've got jist a hundred left."

"Then I'll give you odds and play for it."

"You want to keep me a-playin', I see, ter clean me out."

"Oh, you need satisfaction—see the point?"

"That's so. There's no tellin' when luck 'll change in poker. A cove might git busted to his last cent an' then his fortune sometimes changes of a suddint."

"True for you."

"Oh, I guess I'll not risk it."

"Lord! what a coward! I thought you had more grit in you than that, Leary."

"Well, it's my last money, an' it was hard got, as I did time for it in Joliet, an' had to escape."

"I want that hundred bad," said Hawkins, wistfully.

"Do yer? An' I want wot yer won from me bad, too."

"You see I've got to float out of town awhile."

"Oh, fly coppers after yer, hey?"

"Tom Wonder is on my trail."

"About that affair o' yer uncle?"

"Yes, and he is pressing me hard, too."

"Well, wot odds 'll yer offer me ter play fer this hundred?"

"Ten to one—a thousand against your hundred."

(This story to be continued in our next issue.)

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